DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 455 580 EA 031 119

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Barth, John; Burk, Zona Sharp; Serfass, Richard; Harms, Barbara Ann; Houlihan, G. Thomas; Anderson, Gerald; Farley, Raymond P.; Rigsby, Ken; O'Rourke, John |
| TITLE | Strategies for Meeting High Standards: Quality Management and the Baldrige Criteria in Education. Lessons from the States. |
| INSTITUTION | National Education Goals Panel, Washington, DC. |
| PUB DATE | 2000-04-00 |
| NOTE | 150p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | National Education Goals Panel, 1255 22nd Street, N.W., Suite 502, Washington, DC 20037. Tel: 202-724-0015. For full text: http://www.negp.gov/page9-3.html. |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Research (143) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC06 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Educational Administration; Educational Change; Educational Development; Educational Improvement; *Educational Principles; Organizational Change; *Organizational Effectiveness; *Quality Control |

ABSTRACT

This document, one of a series of reports, focuses on the adoption of principles of quality management, originally developed by W. Edwards Deming, and the Baldrige Criteria for use in education. These processes and tools for systemic organizational management, when comprehensively applied, produce performance excellence and continuous improvement. They are now standard operating procedures for many of America's most successful companies. Educational systems that applied these techniques comprehensively and consistently have seen significant gains in student achievement, decreases in discipline problems, greater employee satisfaction, increased satisfaction and support from parents and communities, and reductions in administrative costs. The eight case studies in this report provide concrete evidence of the efficacy of quality management techniques when applied in education. For example, over 90 percent of all students in the Brazosport Independent School District, Texas, meet state standards and pass the state achievement tests. There are virtually no differences in performance between groups of children, regardless of race or economic background. The appendix contains authors' contact information, 'Air Cover' for Systemic Change--a transcribed interview with Robert T. Jones, and resources and information. (RT)

ED 455 580

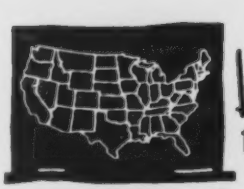
# STRATEGIES FOR MEETING HIGH STANDARDS:

## *Quality Management and the Baldrige Criteria in Education*

NATIONAL
EDUCATION
**GOALS**
PANEL

**April 2000**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



Lessons from the States



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA 031119

# NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

## GOVERNORS

Tommy Thompson, Wisconsin (R), Chairman 2000

John Engler, Michigan (R)

Jim Geringer, Wyoming (R)

James B. Hunt, Jr., North Carolina (D)

Frank Keating, Oklahoma (R)

Frank O'Bannon, Indiana (D)

Paul E. Patton, Kentucky (D)

Cecil H. Underwood, West Virginia (R)

## MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Michael Cohen, Assistant Secretary for Elem. & Secondary Ed., U.S. Department of Education (D)

Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education (D)

## MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman, New Mexico (D)

U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords, Vermont (R)

U.S. Representative William F. Goodling, Pennsylvania (R)

U.S. Representative Matthew G. Martinez, California (D)

## STATE LEGISLATORS

Representative G. Spencer Coggs, Wisconsin (D)

Representative Mary Lou Cowlishaw, Illinois, (R)

Representative Douglas R. Jones, Idaho (R)

Senator Stephen M. Stoll, Missouri (D)

# STRATEGIES FOR MEETING HIGH STANDARDS:

*Quality Management and the Baldrige Criteria in Education*

NATIONAL
EDUCATION
**GOALS**
PANEL

**April 2000**

Lessons
from the States

This report is commissioned by the National Education Goals Panel. The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Goals Panel or its members.

# Table of Contents

**Foreword**
Gov. Tommy G. Thompson

**Managing the Journey to Excellence**
John Barth ..... 1

**Partners for Quality: A Winning Strategy for School Performance Improvement**
Zona Sharp Burk ..... 15

**Building a Case for Improvement: The New Jersey Story**
Richard Serfass ..... 34

**New York State's ESA Program — Helping Educators Improve Student Achievement**
Barbara Ann Harms ..... 48

**North Carolina's Journey Towards Continuous Improvement**
G. Thomas Houlihan ..... 63

**Implementation of the Quality Agenda to Ensure Excellence and Equity for ALL Students**
Gerald Anderson ..... 76

**Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Whole-School Reform: Hunterdon Central's Success Story**
Raymond P. Farley ..... 87

**Building a Quality Culture in Pinellas County Schools**
Ken Rigsby ..... 109

**Pittsford Central School District — Excelsior Award Winner and Role Model for Excellence**
John O'Rourke ..... 124

**Appendix** ..... 134

**The Authors** ..... 134

***'Air Cover' for Systemic Change* — An Interview with Roberts T. Jones** ..... 136

**Resources and Information** ..... 140

# FOREWORD

Our nation stands at the threshold of a second decade of sustained efforts at educational improvement. This is unprecedented in our history, as is the remarkable consensus that has emerged around the core tenets of reform — ambitious goals, rigorous academic standards, accountability for results and a commitment that all children can learn at higher levels.

We have a growing body of evidence that these policies and practices are improving learning for all children. An earlier report from the Goals Panel, *Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas*, documents that a sustained commitment to standards-based reform and a comprehensive system of standards, assessment and accountability have been major factors in dramatic gains in student achievement in those states.

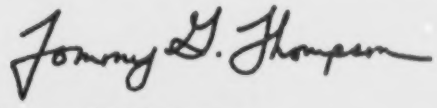
The next challenges for policymakers, educators and the larger community are to accelerate the pace of change and improvement and to insure that the effective practices associated with standards-based reform become imbedded in every state and school district, in every school and classroom.

This is the mission I have set for the National Education Goals Panel during my year as its Chair — to stimulate a national dialogue that will highlight policies, practices and actions that are working and to identify the sources of information and assistance to help educators to implement these ideas and improve student achievement. We will conduct this dialogue through a national teleconference on April 13th to look at quality principles in education, four regional field hearings (Los Angeles, Burlington (VT), Atlanta and Chicago) and a final national teleconference to share what we have learned.

*Strategies for Meeting High Standards: Quality Management and the Baldrige Criteria in Education* is part of that effort and a continuation of the Goals Panel's "Lessons from the States" series of reports. The eight case studies contained in this report document how innovative policymakers and educators are adopting the principles of quality management and the Baldrige Criteria for use in education. These ideas, used for twenty years in the private sector to create high performing organizations, can provide educators with a framework and strategies for improving their schools and helping all children to reach high standards.

Where these strategies are being employed, the results are impressive. Dr. Gerald Anderson, Superintendent in the Brazosport (TX) Independent School District, and his faculty have ensured over 90 percent of all their students meet Texas standards and pass the state achievement tests. More important, in Brazosport there are virtually no differences in performance between groups of children, regardless of race or economic background.

I am pleased to commend this Goals Panel report to your attention with the sincere wish that educators and policymakers like you will find in it information and ideas that will help you in your daily efforts to improve education and the lives of our children.



Tommy G. Thompson
Governor of Wisconsin
2000 Chair, National Education Goals Panel

## MANAGING THE JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

*By John Barth*

### Wishful Thinking?

Imagine a classroom where second-graders understand the expectations set for them through academic standards; where they have examples of excellent work against which to benchmark their own performance and daily track their own progress and that of their classmates toward demanding standards. Imagine schools where students have assumed responsibility for their own learning and are consistently out performing their peers in other schools. Imagine a school district where the differences in academic achievement between minority and majority students, between economically disadvantaged and advantaged students are virtually nonexistent. Imagine classrooms, schools, and districts where students and educators have the tools and the knowledge to consistently succeed in a standards-based environment; where continuous improvement toward demanding goals is the norm and the vision shared by students, parents, teachers and administrators is that *all* children can learn to higher levels.

Imagine an educational system where these examples of excellence are no longer the exception but the norm; where effective practices are shared and readily replicated, policy and practices are aligned in a way to create success, and students and teachers are supported in their efforts to reach excellence. Imagine an educational system where all aspects of system performance are regularly and routinely measured and the information generated is shared with leaders so that their decisions are based on data, rather than anecdote or gut instinct.

### Making Wishes Reality

The above examples are neither wishful thinking nor hopeful exaggerations. They are drawn from the experiences of schools and districts across the country. The one common element among them is the use of the principles of quality management and the core values and criteria

for performance excellence captured in the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award* in organizing and managing their systems.

Quality and the Baldrige Criteria are a set of processes and tools for systemic organizational management that, when comprehensively applied, produce performance excellence and continuous improvement. American business embraced these ideas over twenty years ago, and they are now standard operating procedure for many of this nation's most successful companies.

A decade ago, a handful of innovative education leaders also turned to quality principles and the Baldrige Criteria to improve the performance of their systems. Where application of quality tools has been comprehensive and consistent over time the results have been impressive:

- Significant gains in student achievement,
- Decreases in discipline problems,
- Greater employee satisfaction,
- Increased satisfaction and support form parents and the community, and
- Reductions in administrative costs.

The Baldrige Criteria have now been customized for education. In 1998, Congress authorized an expansion of eligibility for the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award* to include educational institutions. In the first year of eligibility for education, two school districts highlighted in the following case studies — Brazosport Independent School District and Hunterdon Central Regional High School — applied and were finalists for the award.

American education has arrived at a propitious moment to embrace these ideas, institutionalize these processes, and employ these tools. The demands of standards-based reform are challenging our schools and school systems to reach previously unrealized levels of performance — high academic achievement for *all* students. American education cannot meet the demands of high

---

* Two publications, *Using Quality to Achieve Standards* and *Ramping Up Reform in North Carolina*, authored by Dr. Peggy Siegel were indispensable in preparing this chapter. NEGP thanks Dr. Siegel and BiE IN for assistance in producing this report.

academic standards by continuing to operate as it has in the past or by instituting a series of well-intentioned but disconnected reforms.

The new challenges in education demand a systemic response. Quality priniciples and the Baldrige Criteria provide a proven set of processes and tools for creating systemic focus and alignment and for managing the process of change. As the following eight case studies demonstrate, there is now a solid foundation of experience in using of these strategies in an education setting. This experience can inform the actions of policymakers and educators at the state and local levels as they seek to fulfill the expectations of standards-based reform, that *all* children can learn to higher levels.

**Infrastructure, Capacity, and Alignment**

Policymakers, educators and the public have reached a surprising level of consensus on the direction of education reform and improvement. The broad idea at the center of this agreement is standards-based reform and its essential components — academic standards, assessment, and accountability. Nearly every state has developed or is in the process of developing content standards in the core academic subjects. Where state standards are voluntary, numerous school districts are developing their own standards. Most states have created or are creating assessments that, ideally, are aligned with their content standards. Finally, states are putting into place accountability systems that hold schools and educators accountable for student achievement. These systems usually feature public release of school performance data and often include sanctions and/or rewards linked to performance.

The challenge now before us is to build within our educational system the capacity to meet high academic standards. Already these themes have become an essential part of the conversation within the policy and education communities. How can we improve the quality of teaching and instruction? What curricula and teaching practices are most effective? Do we need to increase instructional time for students struggling to catch up with their peers? What role can technology play in raising academic achievement?

These are important questions. Successfully answering them will make important contributions to improving student academic achievement. However, if our efforts to address these and other questions are, as has been the historical case, piecemeal and *ad hoc*, success will remain elusive.

It is often remarked that someone somewhere has solved every problem in education. Those who have studied American education for any length of time have little difficulty accepting this statement. They have read about or visited the classrooms, schools and school districts that are succeeding. American education has always had islands of excellence, places where dedicated educators and communities make schools work well for all children. The problem is that these examples of excellence remain islands, limited to single settings. They are usually dependent on the leadership of an individual, and when that leader burns out or leaves, too often the reform disappears.

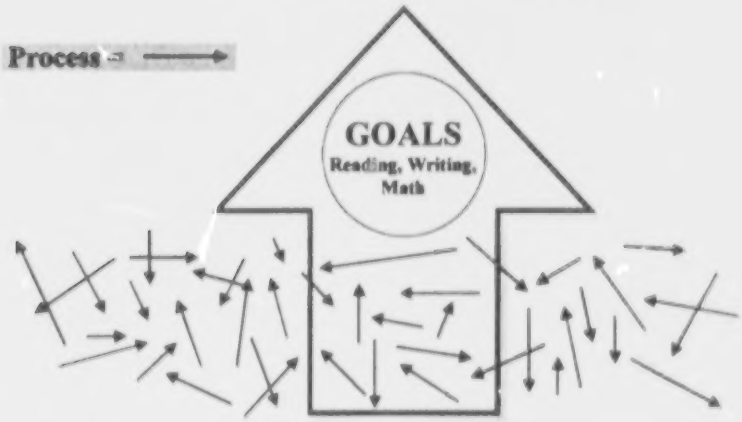
Most of the impediments to success are institutional. Lacking clear signals about expected outcomes and entangled in a web of policies and regulations, stand-alone programs and *ad hoc* responses, most educators have understandably settled for compliance over innovation, the path of least resistance in a disconnected and unaligned system.

Academic standards, by defining the learning expectations for *all* students, provide the "what" of our current reform efforts. In essence, the standards point the big arrow in the diagrams below. The current challenge for policymakers and educators is to address the "how" of implementing improvement. How do we move from educational excellence through individual heroism to educational excellence through systemic design? How do we align the small arrows — the myriad actions and processes in our education systems — with the big arrow — the goals, standards and mission of the system? How do we move from Random Acts of Improvement to Aligned Acts of Improvement? How do we change the basic system in which educators work and children learn to make high achievement for all a reality, continuous improvement the norm?

## Alignment

# Disconnected Improvements

Vision: Every Student Achieving

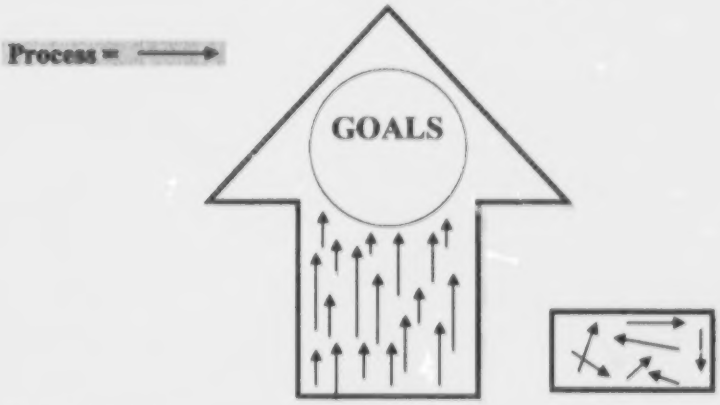



North Carolina Partnership for Excellence

## Alignment

# Connected Improvements

Vision: Every Student Achieving




North Carolina Partnership for Excellence

**Quality Principles and Baldrige**

A growing number of educators, business leaders, and policymakers believe that quality management principles combined with the frameworks of the Baldrige Criteria can successfully address the next set of challenges in standards-based education reform. In combination the two provide a set of organizational beliefs, strategies, tactics, and an organizing framework to initiate and manage the institutional change necessary for high performance and continuous improvement.

Quality management is a set of concepts and practices based on the work of W. Edwards Deming and others designed to increase organizational capacity and effectiveness. Its sets an organizational focus on understanding and meeting customer needs, setting and meeting higher performance goals, and providing employees with the requisite information, resources, and decision-making authority to meet increased expectations over time. Although many educators have been interested in quality processes for some time, their efforts at implementation were hampered by the lack of a conceptual framework for aligning educational activities and tracking performance over time.

That missing conceptual framework is being supplied by the criteria developed for the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.*

**What Is Baldrige?**

In 1987, Congress created the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award to recognize U.S. companies that achieve the highest standard of performance. Business applicants complete a detailed organizational assessment and receive expert feedback intended to enhance their improvement efforts. The purpose, in addition to recognizing and celebrating world-class companies, was to highlight and communicate their best practices so that other U.S. companies could benefit.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) administers the Baldrige Award, which has prompted the creation of comparable programs in three-fourths of the states. In October 1998, Congress approved the extension of the Baldrige Criteria to education and health

care organizations, an action that most state quality awards had already taken. NIST also issued Baldrige Criteria designed specifically for education and health care.

The lasting "award" may well be the Baldrige Criteria document itself — a rigorous organizational assessment tool. It also provides districts and schools with the opportunity to secure constructive feedback from state and community partners. The Baldrige Criteria include a set of core values reflective of high performing organizations and seven general categories, each containing more detailed items. The seven education categories are: (1) leadership, (2) strategic planning, (3) student and stakeholder (customer and market) focus, (4) information and analysis, (5) faculty and staff (human resource) focus, (6) educational and support process management, and (7) school performance (business) results. Applicants are scored and provided feedback on their "approach," how well they address the item requirements; "deployment," the extent to which the applicant's approach is applied to all of the item requirements; and "results," their outcomes in achieving the purpose of each item.

Increasing numbers of educators are using the Baldrige Criteria and comparable state quality programs to help them meet state academic standards and community/customer expectations. Focusing on the interrelationships between approach, deployment, and results — as well as among the seven categories — offers educators at all organizational levels the chance to create and sustain high performance. The Baldrige Criteria also provide a common language across all types of organizations so that educators can engage business partners directly in their improvement efforts, as well as capture best practices from a variety of settings both within and outside of education.

*Source: Ramping Up Reform in North Carolina: Aligning Education Rhetoric, Resolve and Results, Peggy Siegel, PhD, SERVE, 1999*

The Baldrige Criteria provide educators with the basic tools for implementing quality principles. The Criteria form the generic building blocks of performance excellence which can be tailored to the unique characteristics of any organization. They allow leaders at all organizational levels to:

- develop systemic thinking habits;
- define the customers and goals of the organization and its parts;
- analyze the performance of the organization and its parts against a common metric;
- initiate a strategic planning process for improvement;

- define measures to track performance against the goals;
- base decisions on data and analysis;
- provide greater authority, information and training to front line staff to create success; and
- support a climate of continuous improvement.

### The Case Studies

The eight case studies presented in this volume briefly document four state level quality initiatives and four districts' implementation of quality management principles and the Baldrige Criteria. The state case studies are authored by individuals who have played leadership roles in implementing a Baldrige-based improvement strategy in education. The four local studies are written by three superintendents and the director of a district-wide quality academy in districts that have successfully introduced quality and the Baldrige Criteria into their systems. All of these efforts have been underway for some time, all have learned valuable lessons that can shorten the learning cycle for others wishing to pursue a quality agenda, and all have documented results.

### The States

The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) commissioned case studies of four state level quality initiatives. The states examined are Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, and North Carolina. Although they took slightly different approaches, there are common lessons learned:

- **Leadership is critical.** In these successful states leadership came from the private sector and from key policymakers, governors, legislators, state superintendents, and state boards of education. State quality award programs, modeled after the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program*, have provided important leadership and valuable assistance with implementation in districts. Quality leaders in Minnesota closely coordinated their efforts with their legislature early in the process to build understanding and support. Business leaders secured the support of Governor Hunt for a pilot effort to bring quality to education in North Carolina.

- **Business played a critical role.** Business leaders who had led their own organizations through quality transformations were often catalysts for efforts to move these same ideas into education. In the process they defined a new partnership between business and education. Businesses and their employees are now engaged with schools as mentors and facilitators in the improvement process, and companies have opened their training facilities and programs to educators. Tom Houlihan of North Carolina noted that the climate changed and cooperation between business and education increased when business stopped blaming educators for shortcomings and decided to become a part of the change and improvement process.
- **Partnerships are important.** These extend beyond the important links to business. State education leaders and state departments of education need to be involved. Policy and regulatory actions at the state level must facilitate the use of quality principles at the local level. New Jersey, with support from Governor Whitman and the legislature, unanimously enacted legislation providing a waiver from traditional accreditation for districts that employed a Baldrige analysis of their organization. Higher education is another important partner. Universities and community colleges are both customers, by virtue of enrolling graduates form the K-12 systems, and suppliers, providing teachers and other employees to the systems. Barbara Ann Harms of New York also notes that the idea of partnering must ultimately be applied within the education organization — with employees, parents, the community, and suppliers — for success to be realized.
- **Funding can make a difference.** Whether it comes from the private sector or from government — and in the states involved in these case studies it often came from both — financial support to school districts and schools made a difference by helping to create the time and opportunities for necessary training and other needs. Richard Serfass of New Jersey believes that financial assistance can be structured as an incentive to encourage districts to undertake quality programs.
- **Training, training, training.** Professional development is key. The pressure for change may come from outside the system, but the implementation of change must occur inside it. Teachers and administrators need access to timely and effective training to help them adopt new practices and learn to use new tools. In the spirit of the Baldrige Criteria, training

programs must receive feedback to determine if customer needs are being met or if additional changes are in order.

- **Same people, different system.** The improvements in system performance, including gains in student achievement, that occurred in these states and districts happened without wholesale change in personnel. A focus on results, training, and supportive policies has enabled educators to produce dramatic gains in their schools and districts. Tom Houlihan observes, "Many inside and outside education underestimate the potential of teachers and students to achieve higher levels of performance."

The results have been impressive.

In the four school districts that have won New York's *Excelsior Award*:

- Fifty-seven to 77% of students graduated with Regents Diplomas in 1996 compared to 40 percent statewide;
- Eighty-five to 94% of students were accepted into college;
- none of the districts has experienced defeat in a school budget election since implementing its quality initiative and passing ratios have been as high as four to one.

New Jersey school districts implementing TQM and the Baldrige Criteria report similar gains:

- Hunterdon Central Regional High School increased the percentage of students on the honor roll from 2.7%to 11.25% in four years and raised SAT scores;
- Brick Township raised its scores on New Jersey's graduation test from fifth among thirteen districts in the county to first in four years, and incidents of violence in the high school were reduced 60% in three years.

The six pilot districts for Quality in Education in North Carolina:

- increased their average SAT scores — ranging from 95 points in one district to 167 points in another — in three years while at the same time increasing the percentage of students who took the test;

- realized increases in student scores on state accountability tests in math, reading and writing over the pilot period.

Some of the most dramatic change occurs when quality processes are moved into the classroom. In this changed environment students are empowered to assume responsibility for their own learning. Statements from Minnesota teachers provide testimony to this effect:

- "Students like this approach because they see when they accomplish something." "They get their work done. They know what to go onto next."
- "The teacher becomes more of a facilitator instead of an authority figure. (Students) like the responsibility it gives them."
- Sylvia Nicora of Washburn High School in Minneapolis reported that students passing the state writing assessment increased from 0 one year to 72% the next. "The methods align and focus our daily planning and instruction."

**The Districts**

The Goals Panel also commissioned four case studies of district efforts to implement quality programs. The districts examined are Brazosport Independent School District (TX), Hunterdon Central Regional High School (NJ), Pinellas County School District (FL), and Pittsford Central School District (NY). All these districts have nearly a decade of experience working with quality management principles and the Baldrige Criteria. Although these districts differ in size and in the nature of the problems they confront, their common experiences with the use of quality principles form a core of lessons learned that can assist others embarking on the quality journey:

- **Leadership is also critical at the local level.** Leadership from outside education usually provided the initial impetus to introduce quality principles into the education system. Superintendents, key administrators, and the school board need to be actively engaged and lead the process. In these districts, central office administrators and the school board went through the same training experiences as rank and file employees. Leaders at the building level and in support functions also accepted a personal stake in improving their own processes.

- **Business is an important partner.** Business leaders frequently play a catalytic role in introducing quality processes at the local level. They are an important source of external pressure on education to change and improve. They also represent an important source of resources and training in start-up and beyond. Dr. John O'Rourke, Superintendent of Pittsford Central School District, noted that working with business partners to implement quality principles and New York State's Excelsior Quality Award in his schools increased the credibility of the district with key businesses in his community, particularly those using quality processes themselves.
- **Partners make it possible.** All of the case study authors emphasized the importance of partners in implementing a quality agenda. Dr. Raymond Farley, Superintendent of Hunterdon Central Regional High School, points out that partners are a source of human and financial resources that support systemic improvement and as well as an important example against which to benchmark best practices. In addition to business, school systems have found quality partners in post-secondary education, both in universities and community colleges. While many of these higher education partners have come from schools of education, business schools and other departments where faculty have a base of knowledge about the use of quality are another important source. Increasingly, educators interested in implementing quality processes are finding partners among their peers in other K-12 systems that have already made significant progress in their quality journeys.
- **Training is essential.** It is common sense that individuals expected to undergo significant change and to implement new practices require training to succeed. Because quality and the Baldrige Criteria are systemic reforms, training needs to permeate the system. Superintendents, school boards, and key administrators need to participate in training as well as administrators and teachers at the building level. It is also necessary to involve personnel in ancillary functions, such as food services, transportation, etc., to bring change to the entire system. Most systems turn to external partners for initial assistance with training needs. As the demand for training grows, most also focus on building internal capacity. Pinellas County School District created a Quality Academy and used "train-the-trainer" strategies to meet the needs of its system.

- **Measurement, data and information are key ingredients.** Data-based decision-making is a fundamental concept of the Baldrige process. Data allow the analysis of performance against goals and standards and the identification of areas in need of improvement. The measurement process also keeps the organization focused on those goals. Dr. Gerald Anderson, Superintendent of Brazosport ISD, observes, "What gets measured gets done." He believes that in his district data were the "springboard to improvement," a belief echoed by Dr. John O'Rourke of Pittsford who uses data to drive continuous improvement. The need for systemic alignment extends to data and information. The information system must be both comprehensive and focused on the elements that are critical to reaching the goals. Dr. Ken Rigsby, Director of the Pinellas County School District Quality Academy, noted that Pinellas leadership quickly recognized a need to improve their data system to meet the information needs of their internal customers.

## Conclusion

Quality management principles and the Baldrige Criteria have a long history of helping to develop organizational excellence in the private sector. There is now a strong body of evidence that these ideas and practices can be adapted for use in education and that the results are equally impressive. A decade of experience in education has created a body of knowledge and resources that can assist educators interested in using quality processes to improve their schools.

The National Alliance of Business in partnership with the American Productivity & Quality Center and a host of national governance and education associations, have launched *BiE IN*, the Baldrige in Education Initiative, to promote and support the use of Baldrige Criteria and quality processes in education. *BiE IN* is now working with six pilot states — Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, New Mexico, Ohio, and Texas — to help them align policy and build capacity to provide ongoing training and networking to school districts statewide.

Institutionalizing support within states is a critical success factor to drive long-term improvement efforts. For example, the state quality award programs in over forty states have

become important sources of information, training and resources for educators. North Carolina has created a unique non-profit organization, the North Carolina Partnership for Excellence, to encourage, facilitate and support the use of the Baldrige Criteria in education. Indiana has recently passed legislation, similar to that in New Jersey, which creates waivers from traditional accreditation for school districts that employ a Baldrige self-analysis. Finally, there is a growing cadre of educators experienced in the use of the Baldrige Criteria and quality willing to share their learning and experiences with their colleagues.

Brenda Clark, principal of Azalea Elementary School in Pinellas County, Florida once remarked that implementing the Baldrige process in her school was perhaps the greatest professional challenge she had faced but also the most rewarding. A visit with her school's empowered and successful student learners clearly demonstrates that the rewards are widely shared.

## PARTNERS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE, STATE OF MINNESOTA:

### A Winning Strategy for School Performance Improvement

*By Zona Sharp Burk*

**Introduction**

In 1990, the Minnesota Legislature charged the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation (MAEF) with developing a "schools of excellence" program that would establish "state standards, criteria and a process for showing improvement in academic performance over time by schools or districts, and an external review method to validate the reported results." Since 1990, MAEF leaders, in the true spirit of continuous improvement, have been making adjustments to their strategy as Minnesota more fully implements graduation standards, experience deepens, and more sites enter the initiative.

**Background**

Partners for Quality (P for Q), began with the convening of a "schools of excellence" task force of state business, government, and education groups under the leadership of Dr. Valerie Halverson Pace of IBM-Rochester, and Carol Beaver, school principal from Hutchinson, Minnesota. After an extensive national review, the task force agreed on a model: the Malcolm Baldrige National Criteria for Performance Excellence. However, the Baldrige Criteria and its components (a highly respected organizational assessment process, featuring a guided self-study; preparation of a written narrative; and a visit and feedback/rating by a trained external review team) were virtually unknown to educators.

A one-year pilot to test the feasibility of using the business oriented Baldrige Criteria in education paired seven K-12 school districts and seven colleges with 12 Minnesota businesses to complete a mini-assessment using the criteria, then provide feedback on their usefulness. To implement what became known as P for Q, MAEF teamed up immediately with the following constituents:

- two Minnesota Baldrige Award winners in business, IBM-Rochester and Zytec;

- the Minnesota Council For Quality, which promotes use of the Baldrige Criteria and manages the Minnesota Quality Award patterned after Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award;
- other Minnesota companies such as Alliant Tech, Honeywell and 3M;
- six education stakeholder groups;
- the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board; and
- the Minnesota Department of Education.

As a result of these partnerships, Minnesota Council for Quality President, Jim Buckman, who had previously developed an interest in expanding the Minnesota Quality Award beyond business to education, became an enthusiastic supporter of P for Q. "Minnesota had already become a leader in use of the Baldrige Criteria, and we felt that the real frontier of the Quality Movement lay in extending it to the non-business environment," says Buckman, now co-director of the Juran Center For Quality Leadership at the Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota. "Having local resources and Jim and Valerie's leadership so close at hand greatly accelerated our technical support to schools," said MAEF Executive Director Zona Sharp-Burk.

Through Beaver's coordination, MAEF's P for Q Leadership Team — Sharp-Burk, Buckman, Pace, Beaver and others — provided one-day training sessions to educator groups and their boards of directors on the Criteria. The Minnesota Legislature required and then acted upon a feasibility report, which included a deployment plan with ideas for revenue generation and development of ongoing capacity to become self-sustaining. Two House and two Senate members were appointed to work with MAEF and P for Q.

Business leaders, who were solicited to provide technical partners to sites and trainers, became strong supporters of P for Q. Both business leaders and education stakeholder groups were invited to act as resources by serving as "process owners" or experts in one of the Baldrige Criteria categories. The Minnesota Business Partnership, including the largest employers in the state; the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; and the Carlson School of Management contributed

volunteers, money, and political support to P for Q which has helped the program endure nine years in a state where education improvement initiatives seem to come and go every few years.

**Leveraging expansion**

In 1992, on the merits of the P for Q pilot program and with educator interest beginning to increase nationally, P for Q became a Governor's initiative with three goals:

1) to increase student achievement;
2) to increase accountability within the education delivery system; and
3) to develop capacity within schools and classrooms to continuously assess and improve student achievement, school performance and local accountability.

As a result, P for Q was able to leverage venture capital of $400,000 ($250,000 from the Minnesota Legislature; $100,000 from private supporters, mostly businesses like Honeywell, IBM Rochester, and 3M; and fees from education sites that wished to participate) to expand the initiative.

In order to increase interest among educators, day-long introductory presentations, "A Taste of Quality," were held throughout the state. Sites that responded favorably were enrolled to participate in MAEF statewide conferences and regional benchmarking "cluster meetings," encouraged to complete a Baldrige self-assessment, and asked to prepare a written narrative. The resultant expansion led to the participation of 42 new K-12 school and district sites and 38 business partners in the first full rollout of P for Q.

Meanwhile, P for Q worked closely with the Council for Quality and the American Society for Quality (ASQ), to recruit business partners for the sites and to train examiners, who then visited sites that had completed or were completing narratives. In 1993, following a review of the data from a second impact study of the program, these new sites asked for more training in the use of the Baldrige Criteria, and MAEF designed and implemented a full-fledged P for Q training program. Because of the expansion, it was necessary to seek out and develop new suppliers, such as the Quality Center at Alexandria Technical College, then add these suppliers to the training

force. By now, a second state-level quality initiative in New Mexico, *Strengthening Quality in Schools*, was operational, and MAEF had a benchmarking partner.

The release in 1994 of a draft of the Baldrige Education Criteria For Performance Excellence, to which Sharp-Burk and Buckman contributed, provided a big boost to P for Q. "It made the quality process far more accessible to educators," says Sharp-Burk. "While everyone agreed on the business-oriented concepts, we now had a product that was off-the-shelf ready for educator use." Though still unofficial, P for Q began circulating the pilot national criteria and encouraging sites to use them for guidance. After two revisions the national education Criteria were formally adopted and a national award category for education created in 1999. P for Q also developed a school district Case Study, based on actual Minnesota sites, which became the basis for the written Baldrige Criteria narrative for a fictional school district named Ridgecrest. "For the first time, we had an example of a high quality written narrative that we could show newcomers to quality," says Sharp-Burk. Before the Ridgecrest Case Study template, trainers and technical consultants were limited to using examples from business or education sites that had already completed written narratives, most of which suffered from the typical beginner's weaknesses.

**More Sites, Varying Progress**

By 1996, dozens of K-12 sites in Minnesota had been introduced to the Baldrige improvement process and many had written a full narrative assessment. However, few sites had integrated the criteria and the continuous improvement process into their day-to-day operations. "It wasn't being embedded into the organizations to be the effective analysis and improvement strategy it was designed to be," says Sharp-Burk. "Only one site, Minneapolis Public Schools, had begun to engineer continuous cycles of quality review into their School Improvement Agenda." The statewide lack of integration was a result of three missing elements:

1) Clear messages about the use of standards for student achievement and comparative data on school performance. Most sites, fearful of public opinion, could convince themselves and their constituents that they were performing well, using any of a variety of tests and other assessment methods, none of which showed a coherent picture of student achievement.

2) Sites that had completed narrative assessments and were ready for the next step needed assistance from strategic leaders — business volunteers who had been able to lead their organizations through positive change. Previously, MAEF had been using engineers and technical trainers from business and P for Q sites now needed to benchmark and learn from the leaders themselves.

3) Sites needed varied services for the different educational elements now enrolled in P for Q. Minnesota sites had outpaced the linear approach being advocated so strongly by some national experts: the idea that before quality could impact student learning, leaders at the school board, district administration, and school administration levels had to be trained and on board. "We started to see that things didn't happen in a straight line process," says Sharp-Burk. "In one place there might be a principal who had become ready to begin using the tools in his building, in spite of a lack of interest by district leaders. In another case, it was a teacher who had started using the MAEF mini-assessment in the classroom to improve learning. In another place, it might be a superintendent, or a school board leader."

**Multiple Points of Entry**

P for Q, with a nudge from then Lieutenant Governor Joanne Benson, who chaired the P for Q Steering Committee, shifted to a model that provided "multiple points of entry" and customized support and services for educators wanting to work with the Baldrige Criteria, quality principles, and tools, which led in 1996-1997 to a plan to add several new components:

- An *Education Quality Leadership Academy* for district and school leaders and their education quality officers. This component was created by Buckman, Sharp-Burk, and Jim Bartholomew from the Minnesota Business Partnership. It focused on leadership for change: the development of strategic drivers and the creation of long-term systems to help produce change. Honeywell, Medtronic, IBM, Jostens Inc, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Marco Business Products, and Tricord Industries became key business partners. Twelve districts, in the form of superintendent and principal teams and education quality officers, participated in the year-long pilot with business CEOs and their quality officers.

- A *Classroom Quality Program* aimed at teachers, which provided for a mini-assessment of instruction, an increased use of assessment data and student engagement and satisfaction data piloted with primary support from Honeywell and technology support from IBM. The first 15 teachers involved in this program increased student learning in six months, and 66 classroom teachers now are on the way to completing the program's four requirements. MAEF is presently generating classroom examiner teams to provide feedback reports to the teachers who submitted the mini-assessment.
- A *What Works? Ask the Students!* program that involves students as responsible partners in their own learning and assists teachers in planning instructional methods aimed at satisfying student needs. *What Works?* is supported by ReliaStar.
- A *The Partners for Quality School Improvement Pilot Training Program* strategy built on a "train the trainer" model and designed to scale up P for Q across the state. Teachers are trained to use the program and to then train other classroom teachers. School district leaders are trained and subsequently train other district leaders. The goal is to create six new district training centers that will then train 60 additional districts and 100 classroom training sites that will train 1,000 additional classroom teachers. Key support comes from the Minnesota Legislature, IBM, Red Wing Shoes, ADC Telecommunications, and Honeywell. As of July 1999, six districts, 36 school teams, and 665 classrooms have participated in this option, resulting in more than 16,000 Minnesota students and 1,400 educators being affected by this program.
- The *Baldrige Bonus* that provides for the completion of full narratives and the training of school examiner teams. School and district sites that complete full narratives by September receive a bonus incentive and interactions with other sites completing narratives. By September 1999, Baldrige narratives were completed and scored for 11 sites under this option, and 30 volunteer examiners were trained and deployed. Aggregated baseline scores indicated a range of 20% to 40% in Approach-Deployment items and 10% to 40% on Results items.

In 1998, with Minnesota graduation standards more firmly planted on the horizon, requests for more intensive services increased. A new P for Q program vision has been developed that

emphasizes embedding Baldrige quality practices in on-going education planning and delivery systems, including education policymaking, educator preparation, school and classroom operations, and major education reform activities, such as graduation standards and special education. The newly formed P for Q Strategy Team, led by current Lieutenant Governor Mae Schunk, an educator, and Pace, will focus P for Q on multiple strategies to achieve these goals by providing the following services:

- support to the Department of Children, Families, and Learning in Minnesota and to local sites in the roll-out of the graduation standards;
- forging of formal alliances with institutions of higher education, specifically colleges of education and educator preparation groups;
- full deployment of the Education Quality Leadership Academy;
- rapid expansion of the Classroom Quality Program;
- development of the new training centers to become self-sustaining providers of basic Baldrige training services to schools, districts, and communities;
- selection of new districts to become training centers in order to close geographic and demographic gaps in service;
- increased assistance to participating schools in aligning information, indicators, and technology systems to support the Baldrige Criteria;
- greater focus on community engagement to develop external feedback team members and contributors and supporters of school quality within the community; and
- in the spirit of Malcolm Baldrige, continuous evaluation and improvement of MAEF, P for Q and their programs, suppliers, and services.

**THE MINNESOTA CLASSROOM QUALITY PROGRAM:**

**Increasing Student Learning and Improving Educator Practice**

The greatest excitement of P for Q Strategy Team members these days is reserved for the Classroom Quality Program, which focuses on using quality practices to improve classroom instruction and student learning. The program has drawn attention from around the country because it focuses on the classroom, the area where there has been the least and the slowest progress in bringing the quality movement to education, and because all of the classrooms in the

MAEF pilot increased student learning in six months. The program has two goals: to improve student learning and to advance educator practice.

Following P for Q practice, a pilot program funded by Honeywell was created to test the concept. "We were seeing lags and gaps in student learning in communities where we had facilities," said Andre Lewis, Executive Director, Honeywell Foundation, where MAEF went for support for the new pilot concept. "We wanted to see if the same quality tools that have worked so well in business could be used in classroom settings," said Lewis, a former urban school principal. Teachers could receive small grants to be part of the MAEF pilot program and a bonus payment, funded by the Minnesota Legislature and administered through MAEF, if they increased student learning against the stretch goals they set at the onset of their enrollment. The stretch goals had to align with school and district goals for student achievement and with the new Minnesota graduation standards.

Using the Minnesota Classroom Quality Program, teachers (their with students) complete a mini-Baldrige assessment that describes how their classroom accomplishes the following:

1) **Improved Instruction** – Teachers engage students as active partners in the delivery of instruction and classroom decision-making and facilitate self-directed learning. Teachers use data from the program to deploy multiple methods of instruction driven by student preferences, learning styles, and curriculum.
2) **Increased Student Satisfaction** –Teachers establish ongoing methods to determine levels of student satisfaction. The primary tool is MAEF's *What Works? Ask the Students!* a guided focus group/discussion process around the question "What helps you learn?"
3) **Improved Use of Information and Data** – Teachers design and use multiple methods to plan, monitor, improve and achieve student learning results, aligning information usage with goal setting and improvement planning through analysis of data. Teachers analyze levels of student learning results and correlate levels of results with multiple variables such as number of instructional strategies, time on task, class size, use of staff training, and others. Teachers use data to prevent lack of learning.

4) **Increased Learning Results** – Teachers and students collect and report levels of student learning, analyzing results based on interventions used. They compare results to baselines, mid-points, and end-points and correlate levels of student satisfaction, student achievement, student characteristics, student gain, etc.

In the Classroom Quality Program students are the customers of instruction. Students and teachers work together to improve the product: learning. Data is used to monitor progress and measure results. Quality Tools are used to solve problems, to manage learning, to assess the classroom system, and to make improvements. The classroom is the system, instruction is the process, and learning is the product. Quality measures are on-going.

Kent Levine, a teacher who served as one of MAEF's first trainers for the Quality Tools segment of the Classroom Quality Program, says the Quality Tools provide assistance for a variety of classroom improvement. Teachers first need to learn how to use them in the classroom, and then decide which ones to use in which circumstances. "Some tools help the user build knowledge. Some build knowledge and understanding. Some build knowledge and understanding and lead to strategies for improvement," says Levine, who goes into classrooms and models use of quality methods as part of MAEF's training strategy.

"Students like this approach because they see when they accomplish something," says Beth Huntley, who is part of a team of third grade teachers at Zachary Lane Elementary in Robbinsdale, Minnesota. "They get their work done. They know what to go onto next. It gives them a sense of responsibility and makes them feel grown up."

"The teacher becomes more of a facilitator instead of an authority figure," agreed Kay Hay, also of Zachary Lane, and Betty Danielson of Rochester Public Schools. "They like the responsibility it gives them. They're more accountable for their work, and they're prouder of their work."

Sylvia Nicora of Washburn High School in Minneapolis saw scores on an essay writing assignment (one of the new "performance packages" designed to assess learning against the state

standards) go from zero students passing all aspects of the assignment in one year to 72% passing the year after using the Classroom Quality Program to help students understand, prepare for, and complete the assessment. Hay was skeptical of the Classroom Quality approach when she first heard about it. "I thought, 'Here comes one more thing I don't have time for.' But I've seen that it's not 'one more thing.' The methods align and focus our daily planning and instruction."

By the end of the 1998-99 school year more than 300 teachers had been trained using the Classroom Quality Program. About 40 teachers completed the mini-Baldrige assessment of the program's four areas and were awaiting feedback reports from examiner teams trained by MAEF.

### THE PARTNERS FOR QUALITY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT TRAINING SITES:

#### Training Frontrunners to Carry Baldrige throughout Minnesota

When the need for P for Q services began to exceed the resources MAEF had on hand, a strategy built on a "train the trainer" model was designed in 1997 to scale up P for Q services across the state. Teachers would be trained who would then train other classroom teachers. School district leaders would be trained and subsequently train other district leaders. The goal was set to create six district training centers that will train 60 additional districts, and 100 classroom training sites that will then train 1,000 additional classroom teachers. MAEF will gather resources nationally and within Minnesota to ensure that these new quality training centers are well-prepared and allowed the creative latitude to design their own paths to quality. As a result of this work, Minnesota now has five district training centers and a cadre of trainers ready for action.

The P for Q School Improvement Pilot Training Program lays out a contract between MAEF and selected district sites that includes seven initial steps:

1) setting goals for student achievement, identifying methods for measuring progress, and establishing a performance baseline against which progress is to be measured;
2) training in the Baldrige framework, quality principles, and skills needed to complete a Baldrige self-assessment;
3) creating a long-range deployment plan, including a budget;

4) completing a Baldrige self-assessment. Feedback is received from an external examiner team of educators and non-educators recruited and trained by MAEF and the Council for Quality;
5) developing and implementing a district improvement plan based on learning gleaned from the self-assessment and feedback report. Progress is documented and reported periodically;
6) creating and implementing an internal, ongoing district process for continuing cycles of school performance planning, external review, and feedback. The goal is for participating districts to design a "closed-loop, continuous improvement system," such as the one in Minneapolis; and
7) training educators from other districts will occur in the second year, with development of curricula, training trainers, and the development of a process through which new districts can become trainers for other districts.

All told, 1,400 educators affecting 665 classrooms and more than 16,000 students were trained in 1999 in the use of the Baldrige improvement process through P for Q training centers. That number will multiply exponentially the next few years as recipients of P for Q training subsequently train other teachers, and so on, and so on. The centers are presently creating service delivery schedules and business plans with MAEF to generate revenue to support their ongoing operations. Five new district sites were selected in October 1999 to become new centers.

**MINNESOTA EDUCATION QUALITY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY:**

**A Strategic Scorecard for Achieving Standards, Positive Change, and Customer Quality**

From the beginning, business partners have a played a critical role in P for Q. So when P for Q leaders decided to create an Education Quality Leadership Academy to help K-12 leaders better understand change leadership, and when business leaders wanted a method to communicate end-customer requirements to their school suppliers, it was natural to include both groups in the design and delivery process. The Leadership Academy began with two goals:

1) To strengthen the relationship between schools and employers to advance customer-supplier relationships which feed and drive accountability;
2) To advance strong-performing, front-running school districts to accelerate the deployment of high-level quality practices at their site.

"After a few years of P for Q we knew it worked, and that education leaders who got involved wanted to go further faster," says Sharp-Burk. "But they weren't sure how to advance, so we weren't getting the depth of deployment we were looking for. Participants would come to our training sessions and conferences, but most participants just weren't getting around to embedding the quality practices into their day-to-day activities. We wanted to do something that would get them moving faster in that direction and help them be change leaders. We needed a new level of dialogue and a new level of business volunteer — the CEO."

The first Leadership Academy paired a group of top business CEOs and their quality officers with education leaders who had been involved in P for Q. Attendance was by invitation only, and one of the few ground rules was that district superintendents had to attend with their quality team. Twelve school districts and nine businesses were represented at the first Leadership Academy. Arnie Weimerskirch of Honeywell and Gary Floss of Medtronic, both national leaders from the Baldrige Board of Examiners, worked with Sharp-Burk, Jim Bartholomew of the Minnesota Business Partnership, and Jim Buckman from the Juran Center to plan the four session Academy with education leaders. The educators were taken through a process of setting BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals) around increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. The teams then designed a strategic scorecard of leading indicators, strategic drivers from business best practices, and benchmarking around lessons learned.

"We saw real communication between the two groups; they have a lot to offer each other," says Sharp-Burk. "When they got together they talked about the challenges of being the leader and of trying to get others to follow and adopt the quality practices in their work." These cross-disciplinary discussions are especially helpful to educators in the early years of deploying these methods in their district or schools.

While participants responded enthusiastically to the Academy, which featured four one-day sessions over the course of the 1998-99 school year, there were some obstacles to overcome. The biggest problem turned out to be scheduling. "We've learned that it's hard to get these people

together," says Dr. Newell Searle, MAEF Program Director. "Both are obviously very busy, and CEOs are often out of town or out of the country. Plus, how do we keep the momentum and add more education leaders?" In 1999-2000, P for Q will be expanding its Leadership Academy to include a program for school principals and program administrators that will focus on building leadership and management skills, as well as teaching the quality tools and principles. "We discovered that one of the barriers to deployment of the quality practices in schools centered around the weak preparation principals get before they take the job to lead and champion positive change and continuous improvement, and, like leaders in other industries, the minimal support they get once in the job for these critical activities," says Searle. "This component will help them become better change leaders, which will in turn increase their ability to strategically lead and deploy quality in their schools and programs."

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND CYCLES OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:**

**Minneapolis Public Schools**

Minneapolis Schools Superintendent Carol Johnson, one of the key leaders in the P for Q Education Leadership Academy, recently reported that for the district's current ninth grade students to achieve the graduation standards in three years, the equivalent of 3.7 years of growth in learning would need to be achieved for the current school population starting kindergarten today. Minneapolis Public Schools is an urban district of 110 school sites and about 50,000 students. About two-thirds of the students are from low-income families and a similar percentage are students of color, who score disproportionately poorly on standardized tests. "Our students are starting school without the readiness skills we know are needed," commented Johnson. "They are arriving 'late,' not knowing their colors, numbers, or sufficient vocabulary to be successful readers. We knew we needed a major transformational approach to stem this trend."

Minneapolis has met this challenge head-on. Synthesizing its efforts of quality and school improvement planning, Minneapolis has quickly and successfully deployed its own internal, closed loop "Accountability Framework," providing Baldrige-based assessments and feedback reports for the continuous improvement of school sites and the completion of the district's first

Baldrige assessment of its overall efforts. As a result, the district has adopted two organizing strategies to increase student achievement:

1) a focus on literacy, specifically reading, as a "gateway to learning;"
2) a focus on school accountability and alignment to the literacy goals through the "Accountability Framework," which arises from the principles of Baldrige quality.

"The district is now focusing on several key elements of the improvement process," reported Johnson at an April 1999 meeting at MAEF. "The feedback report on the district's Baldrige assessment identified opportunities where we can clearly make a difference:

- consistent communications to our stakeholders and our internal networks;
- benchmarking with similar districts who are doing better than we are;
- increasing the amount and types of feedback and data we want from customers; and
- aligning staff development to advance the district's literacy goals within each school and classroom.

Data is key to our improvement. We have some second grade teachers, for example, who, no matter what students they get, have their students outperforming other students. Data has led us to these teachers. We have met them, and now we want to discover why they get these results." Indeed, Minneapolis is well-positioned, with its "Accountability Framework" to move quickly and persistently on their goals and discoveries. In 1996-97, several district design teams of teachers, school and district administrators, teacher union leaders, parent volunteers, and business representatives partnered with MAEF and its P for Q Initiative to create components of an improvement process that would be more useful to schools. From this work evolved the following elements of a performance system:

- The *Quality Performance Award (QPA)* that provides performance-based grants to schools who meet or exceed goals for student learning;
- The *School Improvement Planning Process (SIP),* a two-year planning and goal-setting cycle that provides schools with a Baldrige-based review and written feedback from external readers on the plan's strengths as well as suggestions to improve the plan to achieve goals for student learning;

- The *Quality Improvement Process (QIP),* a Baldrige-based organizational assessment that includes a guided self-study followed by a site visit with feedback from the external review team;
- The *Professional Development Process (PDP),* a peer-assisted professional performance assessment designed to ensure continuous professional growth, and to tie teacher improvement goals to school and district improvement goals; and
- The final piece of this closed-loop continuous improvement process will, when completed, be a *school performance rating process* that assigns schools to one of three categories: those able to meet their goals; those with room to improve, and those in need of intensive assistance and possible intervention.

Although all parts of the Accountability Framework benefit schools, QIP is undertaken solely for the benefit of school leadership teams and their staffs. "With QIP you are self-motivated as a community to move forward because it's not just an evaluation, it's making you more reflective about what you are doing. It's looking at the school as a system, not just numbers," says Ann Widseth, a district administrator in charge of quality improvement efforts. The QIP uses six categories rather than the traditional seven of Baldrige:

- School Performance Results
- Leadership
- Improvement Planning
- Staffing Systems
- Teaching and Learning Systems
- Family and Community Partnerships.

The staff at Follwell Middle School credits its QIP assessment for helping the school "become a system instead of just a bunch of teams," according to one teacher. The QIP also helped the school increase its use of data for decision making. "We're looking at everything from attendance, to behavior, to grades, to test scores," says Principal Luis Ortega. Folwell's test scores, which had been low, showed one of the biggest increases in the district for the next test

period, a jump Ortega credits in part to the improvement efforts that emanated from the QIP experience.

MAEF holds Minneapolis up as an example to other districts about what is needed to fully institutionalize the continuous improvement approach to running a school district. "Our goal is for every district to do what Minneapolis has done," says Sharp-Burk, "which is to create a closed-loop feedback/improvement system based on standards, assessment against standards, and customer focus." As one of MAEF's first P for Q District Training Centers, Minneapolis is now beginning its work to train other districts to achieve this goal.

## WORTHINGTON MAKES PUBLIC SCHOOLS QUALITY A "STANDARD" CLASSROOM MATTER

Worthington, a rural district in southern Minnesota, serves approximately 2,500 students, with many students using English as their second language. Bedford Industries, an area plastics manufacturer, assisted the district in its journey into quality. Ask Principal Gary Brandt of Central Elementary School in Worthington what he has learned in five years of trying to bring quality principles and practices into the schoolhouse, and he doesn't hesitate to answer. "The key is to show teachers how this can impact their classroom. If you can do that, you have a chance of getting their attention," says Brandt.

Brandt and a team of staff members from Central Elementary, including teacher Julie Wagner, were introduced to the quality movement in 1994 when they attended a P for Q training session that featured educators who had used quality methods to improve their schools. At that time, most of the emphasis was on using quality strategies to create a focus on customer needs and desires, and to assess the education organization using the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria For Performance Excellence used by businesses.

While Wagner's classroom excelled in the first Classroom Quality Program pilot, it was slow going to engage other staff members. The fact that the methods had been developed for and used the language of the business world also served as a barrier to acceptance. But resistance

diminished as more staff members began to use quality strategies to improve the school's operating processes.

Over time, the emphasis shifted from overall operations to the classroom, as more and more staff members came to believe, as Brandt puts it, "If it doesn't happen at the classroom level, it doesn't happen at all." In 1997 the district offered to become a school pilot site for P for Q's scale-up effort to bring quality practices to multiple classrooms. Four district teachers were trained in classroom applications. The goal was to have the teachers act as trainers for other district staff, and indeed, the teachers from Worthington become trainers extraordinaire.

The P for Q contract with MAEF enabled Worthington to use the Classroom Quality Program to train more than 50 teachers from Worthington and surrounding districts in February 1998. Four follow-up sessions were held over the next three months to enable teachers to try the quality practices in their classrooms, and then come together to discuss their progress and learn from each other's experiences. At the time, Minnesota teachers were intensely focused on revising their curriculum and instruction to match the state's new graduation standards. So Phase II of the two-year P for Q Classroom Quality scale-up was designed to focus on applying the Classroom Quality activities to help teachers help students achieve the new graduation standards.

"The goal is to use the tools to help students take ownership of their own learning," says Brandt, "and for teachers to match instruction with student learning needs as revealed in the mini-assessment."

### MINNESOTA ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE FOUNDATION

#### Can a High-Performing State Get Even Better?

MAEF was founded in 1983, co-supported by the public and private sectors through community-based partnerships. Created in response to the report *A Nation At Risk*, it was conceived as an innovative use of business, government, and education resources to address the issues of student achievement and school performance. According to MAEF Board Chair Jim Bartholomew of the Minnesota Business Partnership, "MAEF's goal is to be a voice for and bring innovative

solutions to education customers: students, schools, community, businesses, and the State of Minnesota."

Minnesota's 850,000 students traditionally score at the top of the nation on standardized tests, and graduation rates have traditionally been high compared to other states. However, in recent years, several factors have contributed to the state taking a closer look at the it's education delivery system:

- changing family demographics,
- increasing concentrations of poverty in urban areas and several of Minnesota's rural communities, and
- a growing need by major employers for thousands of more highly prepared workers.

Recent policy initiatives to address these concerns have resulted in the creation of a comprehensive new Department of Children, Families, and Learning; the development and refinement of graduation standards with an emphasis on applications of learning; and an examination of a variety of models for school accountability based on levels of student achievement. Minnesota has about 1600 public schools, in 350 school districts, plus a 65 charter schools, and a variety of other student program opportunities and enrollment options all of which exercise local control over most school operations. Total revenue (from the state plus local taxes) for each public school student in Minnesota is estimated to be $7,090 for the 1999-2000 school year.

MAEF carries out its mission through activities to facilitate systemic change to increase student learning and advance educator practice; to develop values in the community that support academic achievement by and for all learners; to increase students' and families' expectations; to increase the opportunities for students to learn to think, achieve, and go beyond what has ordinarily been a common standard of learning; and, to create partnerships with the private sector, the government, the media, and local communities to focus public attention on academic achievement. Key MAEF initiatives and programs include:

- **School Improvement and Accountability**: Partners for Quality, Classroom Quality Program, Quality Leadership Academy, and business volunteer training.
- **Community Organization and Student Engagement**: Academic League, Academic Booster Clubs, What Works? Ask the Parents!, Minnesota Governor's Scholars, The Road to Academic Excellence, and Urban Outreach Initiative. In FY 1999 Academic League membership reached a ten-year high of 260 school districts and student participation grew to 40% of Minnesota's elementary and secondary population.
- **Incentives, Awards, and Recognition**: Ethics in Education, Milken Educator Awards, Lettering for Excellence, and Gathering of Champions. In FY 1999 awards to educators totaled $160,000 and a network of outstanding educators was initiated to advise MAEF and the state of Minnesota on education policy and resource deployment issues. About 12,000 young people will be recognized for academic achievement at the FY 2000 Gathering of Champions.

MAEF is administered by a board of 22 directors appointed by the Governor to represent various business groups (60%) and education groups (40%), with three *ex officio* student representatives. MAEF has four primary income streams: grants and gifts from individuals and foundations in the private sector; interest from endowment funds housed in community foundations throughout the state; grants and appropriations from government; and fees for services delivered to students, schools, communities, government agencies and business organizations.

### Conclusion

After years of hard work and continuous development, the winning strategy for advancing school accountability and performance for the Partners for Quality Education Improvement Initiative of the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation has proven to be an ongoing journey with the Malcolm Baldrige National Criteria for Performance Excellence, a program that provides multiple boarding points within the education system as well as a customized menu for the different players within the system.

## QUALITY EDUCATION NEW JERSEY:

## Building a Case for Improvement

*By Richard Serfass*

### Introduction

The current New Jersey education system is not meeting the needs of many citizens and businesses in New Jersey. Businesses throughout New Jersey are forced to recruit workers from outside of the state and even outside the country to fill their employment needs. While New Jersey's inner-city school districts are responsible for educating one-third of New Jersey's children, most of these twenty-eight urban districts do not meet the minimum academic standards set for our students, according to the *New Jersey School Report Card*, an annual report to the community on the state of New Jersey schools. Unfortunately, for all involved, these poorly educated students are the workers of tomorrow. It is essential to turn this situation around. Success in New Jersey's schools will lead to increased employment for New Jersey's citizens, less crime, and a better economy.

While some New Jersey schools are in critical need of immediate assistance, all New Jersey schools are in need of improvement. Quality New Jersey (QNJ), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to advance the state of excellence in New Jersey through the application of performance excellence methodologies, assessment and education, was developed to address the critical nature of quality process review. QNJ is one of fifty-six state and local quality award programs that are modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. By the time the organization was chartered in 1991, then-Governor Florio, through Executive Order 41, had established *the New Jersey Quality Achievement Award* in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Commerce. Governor Christine Todd Whitman reaffirmed that commitment in October 1998 by approving the renaming of the award to the *Governor's Award for Performance Excellence.*

However, QNJ is unusual among state quality management organizations because of its commitment to the environment and to K-12 education. The Environment Focus Group of QNJ was instrumental in bringing about a significant clean up of New Jersey's beaches through the

implementation of quality processes and recognition. This public-private partnership has achieved results that include a reduction of beach-block closing days from 834 closings during the crisis year of 1989 of to zero in 1999, leading to increased tourist spending in New Jersey. This effort has been so successful that the problem is now considered solved. As a result, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has asked QNJ to move on to other important environmental issues, such as energy or other New Jersey waterways.

The vision of Quality Education New Jersey (QENJ), the education focus group of QNJ, is to encourage continuous improvement in every New Jersey school. Educators, politicians, and business leaders have suggested many new ideas and approaches. Over the years, legislation has been passed, regulations promulgated, commissions created, and reports written — all in an effort to improve education. However, it is becoming clear that many well intended, but uncoordinated, short-term efforts, are part of the problem. These efforts have seldom led to significant changes in the classroom environment, in student learning activities, or in system-wide transformations. As a result, attention has shifted to more comprehensive and long-term approaches. QNJ believes that the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality model is such an approach.

**Background**

In 1992, a group of educators and business people met at the AT&T training facilities in Bridgewater, New Jersey to introduce a program of continuous improvement to selected New Jersey schools. This event was the culmination of a year of discussion among the education focus group of QNJ and was the start of an eight-year effort to lay the foundation for developing a viable, credible, and sustainable process for improvement in New Jersey schools.

The meeting facilitator, from AT&T, prophetically stated, "You may look back on this date many years form now and recognize that today was a significant day in New Jersey education." He was right! The groundwork has been laid for one of the most significant efforts to improve New Jersey schools, an effort based on a business model, the Baldrige management system. The planning team called itself and its program the Total Quality Learning and Support Pilot

Program (TQLSPP). Its avowed mission was to "...provide leadership to implement total quality principles and practices in the operational processes and instructional content within the educational systems in New Jersey." The planning team had two long-range goals:

1) To sponsor and facilitate the adoption of total quality principles in the leadership, management, and operation of New Jersey educational organizations, including schools and the Department of Education.
2) To develop and disseminate total quality education materials for use in New Jersey educational organizations.

The short-term goal was to pilot the implementation of total quality principles in several selected New Jersey school districts and educational organizations. Several approaches were employed:

- Develop quality leadership teams in participating educational organizations. For school districts this typically includes the superintendent (required), business administrator, central curriculum specialists, a principal, and a teacher.
- Develop partnerships with New Jersey businesses and institutions of higher education to assist with the program.
- Acquire volunteer quality facilitators from New Jersey businesses to work with the education quality leadership teams.
- Develop a network of educational organizations to implementing total quality principles to facilitate the transfer of lessons learned.

The initial pilot educational organizations included the school districts of Asbury Park, the City of Burlington, Cherry Hill, Hamilton Township, Manville Borough, New Brunswick, Brookdale Community College, and the Division of Urban Education of the New Jersey Department of Education. Volunteer total quality facilitators came from AT&T, Bellcore, Innovative Educational Systems, PSE&G, Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals, and Xerox. Selection of the pilot educational organizations was based on their commitment to learn and implement total quality principles in their educational organizations and to share their successes and lessons learned with others. The school districts were also selected to represent small, medium, and large school districts, as well as rural, suburban, and urban school districts.

From 1992 to January 1994, these participants met eight times and were trained in various quality topics, such as listening to the voice of the customer, systemic leadership, strategic planning problem solving, and assessment. The training began with six schools participating and culminated with the participation of fifteen school districts. Each team identified a specific problem or concern that it addressed as it learned new techniques and processes for improvement.

**Continuous Improvement of Education in New Jersey**

Following the initial three years of training, the education focus group took a new name, the Continuous Improvement of Education in New Jersey (CIENJ). The purpose of the restructuring was to move beyond the initial training goals. As one of our business partners said, "We can't train forever, we need to get some results!" This new educational had the support of several businesses throughout New Jersey: AT&T, Lucent Technologies, Telcordia, PSE&G, Johnson & Johnson, Xerox, and IBM. These companies provided funding, training opportunities, and mentorships for the participating schools.

CIENJ rewrote its mission to read: "To provide a means for all educational organizations, including schools, school districts, colleges, professional educational associations, and agencies in the State of New Jersey, to continuously improve the educational outcomes for all students by implementing Quality Management principles and practices in their administrative and educational processes." Bt focusing on K-12 public schools, the goal was to affect all educational organizations in New Jersey.

A review of the program at this time clearly revealed several indicators for future direction:

- Educators need to spend time learning new management initiatives.
- Educators learn best when examples and scenarios are from education.
- Educators need to model successful business practices by "thinking out of the box."
- Educators need to develop in-house facilitators to assist them in their improvement efforts around process management, strategic planning with measurable outcomes, and maintaining their focus on results.

The next phase of the improvement effort took place in 1996 when the governing board of CIENJ recognized several realities led them to consider a restructuring:

- In the almost twelve years since *A Nation at Risk* was published, there has been little improvement in educational achievement.
- Public education is being challenged by alternative education: school choice, charter schools, and home schooling.
- Educator and community commitment to the need for public education and the ideal of a quality education for all students.
- Observation of growing problems in urban education as the gap between poor and rich increases.
- New Jersey schools, while trying new ways to address student achievement, were implementing their ideas in isolation. There was no systemic approach.

Given these realities, CIENJ invited every major educational organization in New Jersey to participate in the reorganization of the governing board. These organizations included the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, New Jersey Association for Curriculum and Development, and others. This newly formed governing board was critical in achieving the successes of the next two years.

The governing board decided on three primary initiatives. After years of facilitating training designed to assist teams, conduct planning, and improve processes, the board clearly felt that a whole systems approach needed to be considered when attempting an organizational improvement process. The first initiative was to adopt the Baldrige Criteria in Education as the means to improve New Jersey education. Several schools provided the leadership for this effort: Burlington City Public Schools, Cherry Hill Public Schools, Manville Public Schools, and Hunterdon Central Regional High School. Concurrently, QNJ announced the *New Jersey Quality Achievement Award in Education* based on the effective use of the Baldrige criteria in education.

In the first year of the new award, two districts, Manville and Hunterdon Central, submitted applications.

The second initiative was to network New Jersey's efforts with other states and the Baldrige National Award Program. Several members of the governing board became Baldrige Examiners and were instrumental in developing the national education pilot criteria that were to be used in New Jersey. As more and more states began awards program initiatives in education, most notably Florida, North Carolina, New York, and New Mexico, CIENJ believed it was on the right track.

The third initiative was to engage the support of the state legislature. Change was not going to happen unless significant action took place and was supported at the state level. Districts were bogged down in excessive bureaucratic requirements, which CIENJ wanted to alleviate. The governing board mustered all its efforts to develop legislation that would encourage school participation, rather than mandate it. Mandating such an effort was rejected for two reasons: mandates rarely cause significant improvement in schools and the state teachers association was solidly against any such mandate. Through the efforts of the organizations represented on the governing board, especially the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association and the State Assembly Legislative Office, a draft of a bill took form. Throughout the next year, several meetings took place with the Senate and Assembly Education Committees of the New Jersey Legislature. Most difficult was getting on the committees' agendas! However, once the dates were set, leaders from business and education, including the New Jersey's Baldrige Award winners, AT&T and Ames Rubber, testified before the committees on behalf of the legislation. This year long challenge culminated in January 1998, as the Assembly passed the "Alternative to Monitoring" Law by a vote of 77-0 while the Senate voted 38-0 in favor. On January 19, 1998 Governor Whitman signed into law Public Law 1997, Chapter 432 . The full text of the law can be found at the end of this article.

This new law is not a mandate to schools, rather it is an alternative to the existing process of Department of Education monitoring. Built into the law is the provision that school districts

must obtain the approval of their teachers' association before considering the waiver (of current regulations) process. This provision is consistent with quality concepts because all personnel are included in major school decisions. School districts can apply to the Department of Education for a waiver and use the Baldrige Application Process as an alternative to State regulations. The wording of the new law begins:

> "It is the goal of the State of New Jersey to prepare its students to be internationally competitive and to meet world class standards through our system of public education. In order to achieve this state priority, leaders from government, education, business, and our local communities must work collaboratively to promote quality, creativity, and accountability in the delivery of educational services."

With this law, New Jersey became the first state in the nation to adopt the Baldrige criteria as an alternative to state compliance monitoring. Other alternatives, such as ISO 9000 and Middle States Accreditation are being reviewed; however, the Baldrige application process is the only alternative in which a school, namely Hunterdon Central Regional High School, received state Department of Education approval for the waiver.

### Training Efforts

It is clear in the quality process that training is a critical component of success. Quality Education New Jersey (QENJ), as QNJ's education focus group was renamed, conducts several programs related to the Baldrige education process. At the same time, QENJ has encouraged other state organizations to conduct training programs, relating their training to quality concepts. The following training programs are currently offered:

- **Quality Leadership Team Training** is a five-day program for school teams that focuses on a significant improvement effort, emphasizing team training, group dynamics, and Baldrige Criteria.
- **Quality Leadership Facilitator Training** is a five-day program designed to train an individual from a school to be a quality process facilitator in his/her own school/district.
- **Self-Assessment Workshop** is a one-day program to help schools conduct a self-assessment.

- **Application Development Seminar** is a half-day program for writing a waiver application.
- **Examiner Training** is a two and one-half day Baldrige-based program to teach examiners how to effectively assess school and organizational applications.

### Impact and Results

Three New Jersey schools led the way in adopting the Baldrige process within their schools: Hunterdon Central Regional High School, Manville Public Schools, and Brick Township High School. Each site offered different levels of commitment and support to their participation in the process. Each school submitted at least one state award application, with Hunterdon Central submitting four applications before receiving the state's highest award, the *Governor's Award for Performance Excellence*, in 1998. Hunterdon Central was also the first non-business organization to win this award, and is one of nine schools that have submitted applications for the first-ever *Baldrige Award in Education* in 1999.

Examples of specific school results that these sites attribute to the Baldrige process include:

**Hunterdon Central Regional High School**

- An increase of the student body on the honor roll over four years from 2.7% to 11.25%
- An increase in average verbal SAT scores from 513 to 541 over four years, including a concurrent increase of students taking the SAT from 84% to 90%

**Manville Public Schools**

- A strategic planning process with extensive stakeholder input, including annual goals, monthly reports, and a quarterly scorecard of achievement
- An increase in faculty/staff participation in shared decision-making teams from 40% to over 80% of faculty in four years

**Brick Township**

- Scores on the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT), the New Jersey graduation test, rose from fifth in the county (out of the thirteen states that use this exam) to first over a four-year period

- Incidents of student violence in the high school were reduced by 60% over three years through the implementation of several targeted intervention programs

### Lessons Learned

New Jersey would like to be further along in this education improvement process; but change is slow, especially when the change strategies require considerable effort. Additionally, there are many skeptics to contend with, both inside and outside education. A recent grant proposal was rejected because one member of the board, a teacher, was against the Baldrige process in the mistaken belief that it mandated programs in the classroom — the antithesis of what the Baldrige process is all about. Looking back over the efforts and accomplishments of the last eight years, a number of recommendations come to mind for states beginning this journey:

- Ensure that the State Department of Education is a major player in this change effort.
- Establish a business/education consortium with significant senior executive financial and conceptual support.
- Elicit grassroots involvement of teachers and administrators at all levels.
- Ensure that a variety of training programs are available for teachers, schools, and districts, providing different models of financial and time investment.
- Develop a strong cadre of volunteers from businesses to assist as mentors and facilitators in the schools.
- Provide incentives for participation to schools, including funding.

### Conclusion

QENJ is actively encourages schools and districts to implement the Baldrige management system. Since every school and district has different reasons to choose to participate or not, there need to be several approaches for schools to become involved. To this end, several alternatives are being developed to encourage the widespread participation of educators at all levels, including:

**The Baldrige system as a waiver to the Department of Education's monitoring process.** This is the major tenet of P.L. 1997, Chapter 432. Because the state monitoring process is a

seven-year compliance program judged by minimum standards and is not an improvement model, the Baldrige quality process can be employed in lieu of the state system if a site's application is approved.

**The Baldrige system as an alternative to accreditation through the Middle States Association (MSA).** In an agreement with this regional accreditation body, schools can receive accreditation from MSA through participation in the Baldrige application process.

**The Baldrige system as a next step after National Blue Ribbon School or State Star School recognition.** Only excellent schools win these coveted honors. However, all interested schools can be encouraged to continue with their improvement processes through the Baldrige process.

**The Baldrige system as a way to involve businesses mentors in the schools.** Individuals and whole businesses are volunteering to assist their local school districts as mentors, trainers, and supporters. These partnerships are win-win for education participating communities. While not every school can win awards, all can continue to improve their system.

**The Baldrige system in support of whole school reform.** Consideration is being given to using the Baldrige management system as the assessment process for many of the whole school reform models being implemented in New Jersey, especially in urban schools.

**The Baldrige system in support of strategic planning.** Through a partnership with the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), schools are being introduced to the Baldrige management process through the NJSBA strategic planning process.

**The Baldrige system as a way to State or National Awards.** Exemplary schools receive state and national recognition through the state and national Baldrige award program.

QNJ is very enthusiastic about this education initiative. The Advisory Board of QNJ has fully supported and endorsed this effort as its major initiative for the future. With effort and support, schools in New Jersey can become models for excellence throughout the world.

Individuals interested in further information about the New Jersey efforts are invited to contact the following:

- Ray Farley, Superintendent, Hunterdon Central Regional High School and co-chair of QENJ, 908-284-7135, rfarley@star.hcrhs.hunterdon.k12.nj.us
- Frank Heelan, Superintendent, Manville Public Schools and co-chair of QENJ, 908-231-8545, fxheel@aol.com
- Richard Serfass, Executive Director, Quality New Jersey, 609-777-0940, qnj@qnj.org
- Joseph Tomaselli, Executive Administrator, Quality Education New Jersey, 732-477-0232, joeclar@injersey.com
- References:

*An act concerning the monitoring of public school districts*, New Jersey P.L. 1997, Chapter 432.

*New Jersey School Report Cards*, New Jersey Department of Education, 1997-98. http://www.state.nj.us/njded/reportcard

*Plan for the Continuous Improvement of Education in New Jersey*, Quality New Jersey, July 1993.

# P.L. 1997, Chapter 432

Assembly, No. 3011

An Act concerning the monitoring of public school districts and supplementing Chapter 7A of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT Enacted *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey.*

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
   a. It is the goal of the State of New Jersey to prepare its students to be internationally competitive and to meet world-class standards through our system of public education.
   b. In order to achieve this State priority, leaders from government, education, business, and our local communities must work collaboratively to promote quality, creativity, and accountability in the delivery of educational services.
   c. An alternative program of monitoring and evaluation of schools may be used to promote the goals of quality and excellence in our schools and to effectuate educational improvement in this State.
   d. The utilization of an alternative program of monitoring and evaluation of schools could effectuate educational improvement by promoting greater use of quality management principles, increasing the exchange of information concerning best practices and the achievement of excellence in education, and promoting partnerships between the public and private sectors in pursuit of educational excellence.
   e. The State would benefit from the use of an alternate program of monitoring and evaluation of schools because:
      1) the alternate program stimulates increased cooperation among internal and external stakeholders in a school system;
      2) the program mobilizes the business community to assist school districts by sharing its expertise in total quality management principles;
      3) the program fosters consensus in establishing district goals, clear values, high standards, and organizational excellence;
      4) the ongoing nature of the district's self assessment process will result in continuous improvement and increased accountability for public schools; and
      5) State and local resources will be more efficiently utilized by the application of quality management principles and a self-assessment process.

2.
   a. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a school district at Level 1 may apply to participate in an alternative program of monitoring and evaluation for the purpose of

certification pursuant to section 14 of P.L.1975, c.212 (C.18A:7A-14). Prior to the application of the school district to the Commissioner of Education for participation n the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation, there shall be consensus between the school districts and the majority representative of the school employees in the district concerning the district's participation in the program.

b. A school district approved to participate in the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation shall conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation according to the criteria established by the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools. The criteria shall include, but not limited to, the criteria used in the education eligibility category of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, established pursuant to subsection (a) of section 3 of Pub.L. 100-107 (15U.S.C. §3711a), and the New Jersey Quality Achievement Award, established pursuant to Executive Order No. 47 of 1991, such as: (1) leadership; (2) information and analysis; (3) strategic and operational planning; (4) human resource development and management; (5) educational and business process management; (6) school performance results; and (7) student focus and stakeholder satisfaction.

c. This Commissioner may eliminate a school district from participation in the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation, if the Commissioner deems it to be advisable. The Commissioner shall inform the school district of its elimination from the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation provided for in sections 10, 11 and 14 of P.L.1975, c.212 (C.18A:7A-10, 18A:7A-11 and 18A:7A-14).

3. The Commissioner shall promulgate rules and regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,c.410(C.52:14B-1 et.seg.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

4. This act shall take effect immediately and the Commissioner of Education shall make the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation available to eligible school districts in the 1998/1999 school year.

STATEMENT

This bill provides for an alternative program of monitoring and evaluation for school districts at Level I for the purpose of certification pursuant to section 14 of P.L.1975, c. 212 (C.18A:7A-14). The alternative program of monitoring and evaluation will be based on the district's continuous process of self-assessment according to criteria established pursuant to this act.
A school district which participates in the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation will conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation according to criteria established by the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools. The criteria will include, but not limited to, the criteria used in the education eligibility category of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, established pursuant to subsection (a) of section 3 of Pub.L. 100-107 (15 U.S.C. §3711a) and the New Jersey Quality Achievement Award established pursuant to Executive Order No. 47 of 1991. Which focus on key requirements for organizational excellence. The criteria will address leadership; information

and analysis; strategic and operational planning; human resource development and management; educational and business process management; school performance results; and student focus and stakeholder satisfaction. The bill provides that the Commissioner of Education may eliminate a school district from participation in the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation, if the commissioner deems it to be advisable. The Commissioner of Education will make the alternative program of monitoring and evaluation available to eligible school districts in the 1998-1999 school year.

Provide for an alternative program of monitoring and evaluation for school districts.

## NEW YORK STATE'S EMPIRE STATE ADVANTAGE (ESA) PROGRAM:

### Helping Educators Improve Student Achievement

*By Barbara Ann Harms*

**Introduction**

New York State has a rich and colorful history. For more than 200 years it has been, and continues to be, a world leader in manufacturing, commerce, education, culture and the arts, health care, and many other areas. From Niagara Falls to Manhattan, The Empire State possesses a varied set of natural, cultural, and financial resources that are recognized around the world. New York's leadership position, both on the national and international fronts, and its long-term prosperity are dependent upon its ability to create and sustain a vibrant, robust economy that contributes to an ever-higher standard of living for all its citizens. This can be achieved only if all sectors of the state's economy — industry, education, healthcare, and government — are competitive at the highest levels to produce world-class goods and services.

**Background**

Schools in New York State are under increasing pressure to meet the new Regent standards, comply with various accreditation and regulatory requirements, and to increase student achievement. Our society depends on primary and secondary schools to deliver graduates who have the knowledge and skills they need to enter the workforce or continue their education successfully. Taken one step further, society thrives only if its citizens are well-rounded, productive contributors. Schools have a significant influence on children's development, second only to their families; therefore, it is imperative that educators do everything within their power to develop dynamic curricula taught within a nurturing environment to help students reach their maximum potential. To accomplish this, it takes a comprehensive management approach that is supported by rigorous processes and is focused on students as the customers of instruction.

Private sector companies have proven over the past two decades that using quality principles is the most effective vehicle for instituting positive, necessary changes in management to ensure process alignment and to deliver greater efficiencies, increased employee and customer satisfaction, and ever-improving performance results. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality

Award was created out of this movement, both to recognize those organizations that achieve world-class performance and to provide a self-assessment tool that can be used by interested organizations to determine their progress on the journey to excellence. Following this example, many states developed Baldrige-based award programs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. New York was no exception.

**Phase I — The Governor's *Excelsior Award***

The Governor's *Excelsior Award* was created in 1991 through a unique public/private sector partnership in an effort to drive excellence and continuous improvement forward within all economic sectors statewide. This partnership comprises four key players:

The Excelsior Founders, a group of private-sector corporations that donated substantial funds to underwrite the development of the program. These companies understood quality management and could attest to its impact on their businesses. The Founders include: AT&T, American Express Company, Avis, Inc., Corning Incorporated, Dale Carnegie & Associates, Inc., Delta Consulting Group, Inc., Dresser-Rand Company, Eastman Kodak Company, General Electric Company, Goulds Pumps, Inc., IBM Corporation, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York Telephone Company, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation, and Xerox Corporation. Without the support of these companies, the creation of The Excelsior Program would not have been possible.

The Excelsior Executive Committee, which was responsible for creating and launching the program. The 18-member committee was comprised of corporate CEOs and officers; state agency officials; university deans, college presidents, and school superintendents; and high-level union leaders, including representatives of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the AFL-CIO. Each sector had an equal voice in the development of Excelsior, and the diversity of the group resulted in the energy for the vast amount of work to be done.

New York State government led by then-Governor Mario Cuomo and Lieutenant Governor Stan Lundine, both of whom were committed to the implementation of quality principles across public and private sectors as a vehicle for driving economic development throughout the state. Additionally, the State provided invaluable administrative and logistical support through a

number of its agencies. Organized labor provided the perspective of the state's workforce. New York is a highly unionized state, particularly in the private and education sectors. NYSUT is not only the largest teacher union in the state, but it is one of the largest unions, with over 300,000 members. At the time Excelsior was being developed, it was unusual for organized labor to support quality management openly, but in the case of the Excelsior Program New York's unions were on board from the beginning.

The Executive Committee was a team in the best sense of the word — an extraordinary group of volunteers working together toward a goal that was larger than any individual member could achieve alone. The team was able to make early and significant progress in developing the *Excelsior Award* for two reasons. The first was the prior existence of the Baldrige Award, and all that can be learned from a major national award with several years of experience. Second, a number of committee members had substantial experience as Baldrige examiners and/or judges.

However, the real benefit of using the Baldrige model and having the Baldrige experience was the freedom it afforded the Excelsior team to make innovative and appropriate changes. Because the major elements were in place and the fundamentals could be agreed upon quickly, energies could be directed at tailoring the Excelsior program to meet the unique needs of New York State.

The first change was dramatic and fundamental. It extended the concept of quality from private enterprise into two additional sectors: government and education (healthcare was added as a fourth sector in 1995). This innovation sprung from the belief that all sectors are intrinsically linked, and they depend upon each other for their mutual success. Businesses must produce quality goods and services; schools must produce well-educated graduates to enter the workforce; government agencies must provide public services efficiently; and healthcare organizations must deliver the best possible medical care at a reasonable cost. New York State's *Excelsior Award* was the first quality award at any level — state, national, or international — to include multiple sectors.

Each of the sectors was addressed individually within the Excelsior format. This process was made easier because each sector was represented on the Executive Committee. For example, educators were able to bring their experience to the table, ensuring that the materials developed for their sector use appropriate language and reflected the purposes of education. Although the basic quality concepts remained constant throughout all three sectors, separate criteria and application requirements were developed, and a separate application manual was published for each.

In a second deviation from the original Baldrige Award, the Executive Committee added an emphasis on partnering. Partnering is the process by which an organization reaches out to create meaningful alliances with employees, unions, customers, suppliers, communities, and others with whom it shares a common interest. This is especially important for employer/employee and organized labor partnerships, since in order to ensure quality each must overcome adversarial relationships and build their future on shared interests and mutual respect.

The third innovation made by the Executive Committee was the addition of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity as criteria of the *Excelsior Award*. Applicants describe what they are doing to ensure that all of the resources of the organization are extended in meaningful ways to women and minorities. The social justice argument for diversity is obvious. However, there is also a persuasive economic argument that our survival in the future will depend on the full utilization of all members of the workforce.

Finally, Excelsior broke from the Baldrige tradition by instituting a non-compete policy for the award. In its first two cycles, Excelsior limited the number of winners to two per sector, which meant that applicants in each sector were competing against each other. With the policy change, applicants compete only against the standards defined in the Baldrige criteria, and all who qualify or meet the standard receive the award. Between 1991 and 1996, 91 organizations participated in the *Excelsior Award* program, with 26 applicants from the education sector. In that five-year period, four school districts won the award, including Kenmore-Town of

Tonawanda School District, Pearl River School District, Pittsford Central Schools, and Sewanhaka Central High School District.

**Challenges in Introducing the Program**

While support for extending the Excelsior program beyond the private sector has been strong, there were and continue to be some challenges associated with the introduction of the "new" sectors to the Baldrige concepts, language, criteria, and processes. This was particularly true in the education sector during the early years. In response, Excelsior published its "Starter Guide" in 1993 as an introductory tool for those unfamiliar with the Baldrige model. This workbook simplifies the model and walks the user through a basic organizational self-assessment focused on the seven criteria categories. An even more basic tool, the "Strategic Steps Workbook," was developed later for small businesses. These workbooks have received wide acceptance and have been used by a variety of organizations from all sectors. In addition to publishing the workbooks, Excelsior uses conferences and seminars featuring award winners as key vehicles for introducing the Baldrige model.

**Phase II — The Empire State Advantage: Excellence at Work**

With the election of Governor George Pataki in 1996 came a period of transition for Excelsior. As his administration took office in the state capital, there was an expected change in leadership within the various agencies that had been part of the Excelsior team. Refusing to let go of their vision for a better New York, the CEOs of Corning, Kodak, NYNEX (formerly New York Telephone), and Xerox made personal appeals to the new Governor to champion the program and ensure its continuity. With additional support from IBM and The Business Council of New York State, Inc., these original Founders were able to engage Governor Pataki's key staff and successfully renew the partnership with the State. They did so by adding a new certification initiative to the program.

The State's willingness to sign on and fully support the expanded program is testament to its inherent value. Just as the Baldrige Award has done through the years, Excelsior has been able to transcend politics and changes in administration, and to continue as a vital, successful program.

Now known as *The Empire State Advantage (ESA): Excellence at Work*, the program continues to build on its legacy as one of the most innovative and progressive state quality award initiatives in the nation. Today, ESA offers two value-added, cost-effective consultative programs that increase performance excellence through an integrated system of self-assessment, site visits, and actionable feedback. In keeping with the Excelsior tradition, the programs are open to for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in the private, education, government, and healthcare sectors.

**The Governor's Award for Excellence**

Like Excelsior, *The Governor's Award* represents the highest form of recognition for quality and performance excellence in New York State. To receive the award, which is presented annually by the Governor, organizations must undergo a rigorous application and judging process, after which they receive a comprehensive feedback report. There is no requirement that a winner be named, nor is there a limit to the number of winners each year. Organizations that do not qualify for the award, but demonstrate a particular strength in one or more of the seven criteria categories are eligible to receive an *Exemplary Practice Citation. Governor's Award* winners are certified automatically as "Empire State Gold" in accordance with the ESA program requirements.

**The ESA Program**

In another innovative move and in response to customer demand, ESA launched The ESA Program in 1997. Some *Governor's Award* applicants, as well as other organizations just beginning to implement quality improvement management systems, suggested that a less-intensive, more interactive program was necessary for best results. A recurrent request continued to bubble up from participants for a process that could help organizations throughout the quality journey, from introducing them to the fundamental concepts, to helping them design and implement their own quality management system, and ultimately to achieving *Governor's Award* status.

The ESA Program was designed to meet these needs through a three-tiered process to certify the effectiveness of an organization's overall management system. Participation in The Program

requires a three-year commitment to operational growth and change. In the first year, an organization applies for certification. Once certified, the organization submits a progress report that focuses on its improvements in operational systems and performance results for each of the following two years. The report is evaluated by ESA Reviewers who provide feedback to the applicant, including further recommendations for improvement.

Certification is granted at two levels: *Empire State Gold* and *Empire State Silver*. At both levels, the applicant can have its management system certified with distinction as well, which indicates not only the level at which the organization has been recognized, but also that it has achieved exemplary status in one or more of the ESA criteria categories. In addition, applicants who do not qualify for certification can be cited as an ESA Partner. All *Empire State Gold* organizations are encouraged to apply for *The Governor's Award for Excellence*.

**Piloting the Program**

The ESA conducted a pilot of The ESA Program before opening the application process to the public. Seven organizations (including three school districts) were invited to participate in the pilot phase, which was administered by a group of Senior Reviewers. As when Excelsior was created, input from all sectors from the start was essential in tailoring the new program to meet the various sectors' needs.

At the conclusion of the pilot phase, five of the seven participants were certified *Empire State Silver* and two were cited as *ESA Partners*. An intensive debriefing session was held with the pilot organizations, the participating Reviewers, and ESA board members and staff. There was a unanimous opinion among the participants that The ESA Program was filling a much-needed niche. The school districts in particular found ESA's format to be very effective in helping them to align their programs and processes to facilitate student achievement.

Binghamton City School District, a pilot participant, was certified *Empire State Silver with Distinction*. As a former *Excelsior Award* applicant, the district brought a unique perspective to The ESA Program. Of their experience as an ESA pilot organization, Michael Melamed,

Assistant to the Superintendent of Binghamton City Schools, said, "We really appreciated the less formal application process and the increased dialogue The ESA Program offers. This program is well focused and provides an excellent opportunity for improvement. The Reviewers who conducted our site visit were highly skilled at helping us to understand how business models can be applied within the education sector. We are excited about the three-year collaboration and the support we will be receiving from ESA." Mr. Melamed added, "Our participation in this program aligns quite well with our overall continuous improvement strategy. We have used the feedback we received from our Excelsior and ESA experiences to develop organizational improvement initiatives, which we are funding with Goals 2000 grant monies. Our expected outcome is to realize even better, more efficient programs that will result in increased student performance."

Kathryn Carlson, Assistant Superintendent of the *Empire State Silver* Skaneateles Central School District, said, "As a school district we are required to answer to a number of regulatory bodies. As a result, we are continually measuring ourselves and collecting data. At times it has been difficult to sort through it all and establish our own performance goals and objectives. The ESA Program has given us a fresh perspective on how to interpret data, as well as the tools to use it in a meaningful way. We can now 'raise the bar' and set higher standards for ourselves with confidence that we will be able to accurately measure our results."

The third pilot organization from the education sector was West Genesee Central Schools, which was cited as an ESA Partner for achievement in leadership and strategic planning. Suzanne Connelly, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, said of their experience, "We are very pleased with the ESA process because it allowed us to measure ourselves, and it provided an opportunity for an external assessment. Both of these components were equally important to us. Also, ESA aligns very well with our own continuous improvement efforts. The administration, our School Board, and our district Planning Team are using the process, our application and the feedback report in their decision making. Additionally, we feel the partnership and follow-up aspects of The ESA Program are key. These two components make

this program very different from any other that we know about. ESA really does have a fresh approach to educational assessments."

The feedback received during this session was invaluable, and was used to enhance The ESA Program for future participants. In the time since The ESA Program was launched, 22 organizations have participated with two being certified Empire State Gold, 11 certified Empire State Silver, and nine cited as ESA Partners. Of the total, eight are school districts.

### The Core Values and the Criteria

The two ESA Programs are based on a set of core values that define what it means to be a world-class organization, regardless of size or economic sector. These 10 core values are Baldrige-based and describe the characteristics of an organization that is operating at the highest levels of performance excellence. Schools that are quality-driven must internalize these core values so that they become fundamental to the way work is done, beginning with the top leadership, including boards of education, superintendents, union leaders, and administrators, all of whom must work together cooperatively in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust to help teachers and students to be successful in the learning process.

### The Core Values

The definitions presented here pertain specifically to the education sector:

**Student/Customer-Driven Quality:** First, schools must identify whom their key customers and stakeholders are. Then, school leaders must develop programs for the present and future that are tailored to meet improve the achievement of these customers separately and collectively.

**Leadership:** Within a school district, the superintendent must work with the Board of Education, school administrators, union representatives, and community and business leaders. Together, they must establish clear direction and specific goals, as well as well-defined systems and methods for achieving those goals. This includes acquiring the necessary resources to attain the goals and utilizing those resources effectively.

**Participation by All Employees:** Districts must create and maintain work environments that foster full participation by faculty and staff so that everyone is able to reach their highest

potential. Such environments include a strong commitment to communication, labor-management cooperation, ongoing training, teamwork, and incentives.

**Cooperation and Partnering:** Schools need to establish internal and external partnerships that are mutually beneficial. These partnerships should function within a cooperative and coordinated system.

**Diversity:** Employing people of different genders and abilities, and with a rich variety of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and physical characteristics enable the school to serve its customers and community effectively. It is equally important for schools to embrace and celebrate the diversity of their student populations.

**Continuous Improvement:** Schools must work constantly to improve student achievement and all processes that impact student performance.

**Fast Response:** Essential in a well-managed, student-focused school is the development of processes and systems that allow for a flexible and adaptive response to changing requirements at every level of the system.

**Actions Based on Facts, Data, and Analysis:** Schools need to measure all key indicators of success and improve operations based on these measurements.

**Prevention and Design Quality:** Doing it right the first time should be a guiding principle for schools in the educational process. Also, it is essential that continuous improvement and corrective actions occur early to yield maximum benefits.

**Long-Range Outlook:** Schools must keep abreast of economic, societal, and political changes that might impact their operations. Additionally, schools need to benchmark against the best schools and other organizations to identify superior processes that could be emulated.

**Equity:** All students are capable of learning. Therefore, student outcomes must show evidence that all students, regardless of race, sex, or socio-economic status, are learning successfully. Schools that achieve equity ensure equal access and opportunity, collect and analyze data by appropriate subgroups, and reflect equity concerns in planning for and approaches to improvement.

**From these core values, a set of criteria have been developed that are organized into seven categories: Leadership, Strategic Planning, Customer/Student Focus, Information and**

**Analysis, Human Resource Development and Management, Process Management, and Performance Results.**

### Impact on Educational Institutions

The *Excelsior/Governor's Award for Excellence* and The ESA Program are having a tremendous impact on New York State schools and school districts. Participants can demonstrate with verifiable data the improvements that have been made since implementing a quality management system and/or engaging in The ESA program. For example, the four *Excelsior Award*-winning school districts have achieved impressive results that are illustrated in the following statistics:

- 57% - 77% percent of students graduated with a Regents Diploma in 1996 versus 40% for all NYS public schools.
- 85% - 94% percent of students were accepted at colleges.
- None of the four districts has experienced a budget defeat since implementing quality improvement strategies; passing ratios have been as high as 4 to 1.

### Educational Roundtable

In 1999, ESA created an Educational Roundtable to bring together *Excelsior/Governor's Award*-winning and ESA certified schools and school districts to learn from each other. By sharing their lessons learned from working with the Baldrige model, these schools are identifying best practices that all can use to improve operations. Representatives from the private sector were invited to one session to provide their perspective on human resource management. Although the Educational Roundtable has been convened only twice, the participants consider it to be a valuable vehicle for statewide discussion that leads to school improvement.

The impact of the ESA programs on schools has been validated externally by two recent decisions of the Middle States Association and the New York State Department of Education.

### Middle States Accreditation (MSA) and The ESA Program

At their spring 1999 meetings, all three Middle States Association (MSA) school Commissions officially approved the use of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria and The

ESA Program for certain parts of the MSA accreditation protocol. This means that elementary, secondary, and K-12 schools and school districts in New York State may use The ESA Program in lieu of the traditional MSA self-study and team visit. Accreditation maintenance would be fulfilled through the ESA three-year evaluation and reporting process.

The acceptance of the Baldrige criteria and The ESA Program will be part of a five-year pilot project aimed at ensuring that the Baldrige protocol responds to and addresses the Middle States accreditation criteria. During the pilot period, ESA applications will be accepted as the required self-study document. The site visits conducted by the ESA Reviewers and the subsequent written Feedback Report will be used in place of the accreditation team report requirement. The accreditation action and date will be based on these two documents, and as stated previously, the three-year reporting/evaluation process administered by ESA would fulfill MSA accreditation maintenance. Should a school or district discontinue its involvement with The ESA Program, it would resume submission of periodic progress reports to the MSA.

Binghamton City Schools, which was certified by The ESA Program as *Empire State Silver With Distinction* in 1997, was approved as the first district in New York State to utilize the ESA process for reaccredidation purposes. The MSA will work closely with Binghamton to learn as much as possible about how to blend Baldrige-based programs and MSA into an exemplary school improvement program.

The collaboration between MSA and ESA is made possible because of the rigor and strength of the Baldrige-based criteria used by ESA, as well as The ESA Program's focus on continuous improvement.

**Centers for Excellence**

The ESA has applied for a Goals 2000 grant that will be administered by the New York State Department of Education to create regional "Centers for Excellence." The purpose of the initiative is to use The ESA Program to introduce the Baldrige-based management model to districts throughout the state in order to facilitate school improvement.

Beginning in late 1999, one *Empire State Silver* and three *Excelsior Award*-winning school districts will lead the Centers for Excellence program with assistance from the ESA Board of Reviewers and staff. Ten school districts will be invited to participate in the first round of the program. They will work with the program leaders to increase their awareness of the Baldrige model and how it can be used to improve school performance. Also, these districts will gain first-hand experience in how the Baldrige model works, and they will learn how to implement it their school districts.

Developing the Centers for Excellence has been a significant milestone for ESA, as the process has served as a catalyst for a statewide discussion on educational improvement among schools and educational agencies. A viable partnership has been formed that will serve as a springboard for moving the Baldrige model into schools throughout New York State. By awarding the grant, the Department of Education has demonstrated its understanding of the value of the Baldrige model and the impact it can have on schools and validated The ESA Program as a viable means to help schools succeed.

**The Honor Roll of Excellence**

The Empire State Advantage Honor Roll of Excellence includes all of the organizations that have been recognized through The *Excelsior/Governor's Award for Excellence* and the ESA programs.

**Award Winners**

- 1999 *Governor's Award for Excellence*: Otetiana Council Inc., Boy Scouts of America
- 1998 *Governor's Award for Excellence Exemplary Practice Citations*: F. F. Thompson HealthSystem, Inc., and Tri-state Industrial Laundries, Inc.
- 1996 *Excelsior Award* Winner: Pittsford Central Schools
- 1995 *Excelsior Award* Winners: Dresser-Rand Steam Turbine Operation, Gordon S. Black Corporation, IBM Endicott Microelectronics, and Sewanhaka Central High School District

- 1995 *Excelsior Award Exemplary Practice Citations*: PSC Inc. and Strong Memorial Hospital
- 1994 *Excelsior Award* Winners: AIL Systems, Inc., Loral Federal Systems-Owego, Pearl River School District, Replacement Components Division of the Carrier Corporation, and Trident Precision Manufacturing, Inc.
- 1993 *Excelsior Award* Winner: Davis Vision, Inc.
- 1992 *Excelsior Award* Winners: Albany International's Press Fabrics Division; Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda School District, Motorola Automotive and Industrial Electronics Group, and the New York State Police

**ESA Certified Organizations**

- 1999 ESA Certified *Empire State Silver*: Anheuser-Busch Sales & Service of New York State, Inc., Berkshire Union Free School District, and Jones Memorial Hospital
- 1999 ESA Partners: East Islip Central School District and New York City Transit's Department of Capitol Management
- 1998 ESA Certified *Empire State Gold, With Distinction*: F. F. Thompson Continuing Care Center, Inc. and F. F. Thompson Hospital
- 1998 ESA Certified *Empire State Silver*: Strong Memorial Hospital
- 1998 ESA Partners: City of Rochester, Department of Environmental Services, CVC, Genesee-Livingston-Steuben-Wyoming BOCES, Highland Hospital, School District of the City of Niagara Falls, and West Genesee Central School District
- 1997 ESA Certified *Empire State Silver, With Distinction*: Binghamton City Schools
- 1997 ESA Certified *Empire State Silver*: Medina Memorial Hospital, Skaneateles Central School District, St. John's Riverside Hospital, United Cerebral Palsy of the Utica Area, Inc., and West Babylon Union Free School District

**Conclusion**

By participating in The ESA Program and/or *The Governor's Award for Excellence*, organizations learn how to utilize the criteria to drive strategic school improvement that is verifiable against any standard. When utilized fully, the standards contained in the criteria place

organizations on a path to excellence where continuous improvement becomes the way of ensuring operational effectiveness and achieving outstanding performance results becomes the norm.

*As the century turns, the Empire State Advantage: Excellence at Work will continue to work toward fulfilling its mission: to assist organizations in all economic sectors to apply world-class values and concepts to improve organizational effectiveness, leading to an ever-increasing quality of life for all people in New York State. Also, ESA will continue to be innovative, always searching for the next program improvement that will better serve customers in all sectors. The work that is being done in education is exciting and rich with potential for school districts throughout the state.*

## NORTH CAROLINA PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE:

## An analysis of the role the State of North Carolina has played in encouraging and facilitating the use of Baldrige/quality-based strategies for improvement

*By Tom Houlihan*

### Introduction

The state of North Carolina, like many other states, spent the decade of the 1980s responding to the publication "*A Nation At Risk*." Long known as a state willing to try new approaches, North Carolina was involved in one reform effort after another during this time. However, despite new dollars and new ideas, student achievement remained unchanged during the 1980s and early part of the 1990s. Perhaps the low ebb in the history of North Carolina's public education system occurred in the late 1980s. During this time North Carolina's SAT scores dropped to an all-time low in comparisons with other states. As a result, the public education system was viewed by politicians, media, and business leaders as "one of the worst in the nation."

Educators, business leaders, and politicians were frustrated. In spite of numerous attempts to improve public education, nothing seemed to be working. North Carolina's schools were mired in mediocrity — business leaders were extremely concerned, the economy was in a deep recession, and public and private sector budgets were being cut. The future did not look promising.

### Background

Fast forward to 1999, a time of unparalleled economic and education progress in North Carolina. In September of 1999, the National Alliance of Business (NAB) chose the state of North Carolina as the *Education State of the Year*. In addition NAB selected The North Carolina Business Committee for Education, the North Carolina Partnership for Excellence, and the North Carolina Public School Forum as *State School-Business Coalitions of the Year*. These awards emphasized a renewed spirit of success.

From an economic standpoint, the state had achieved a level of competitiveness that is the envy of many states across the country:

- In 1998, the state's business community invested $7.8 billion in new and expanding industrial capacity.
- From 1993-98 over 600,000 jobs have been created.
- In 1999 more North Carolinians are employed in manufacturing than was the case 20 years ago. This in spite of NAFTA and the loss of textile jobs to Mexico.
- The biggest job gains have occurred in information technology, automotive components, pharmaceuticals, and biochemistry, all requiring highly skilled employees.
- The state is home to the largest bank and the largest steel company in the US.
- Overall employment is more diversified and more highly skilled than ever before, with the key to North Carolina's growth a higher skilled workforce — the cost of staying competitive.[1]

It is no accident that as North Carolina's economic fortunes have dramatically improved, so too have the public schools of the state. In fact, the public schools of the state have also enjoyed unparalleled success in the past decade:

- North Carolina is one of only five states to achieve significant gains in 4th grade reading skills from 1992-1998. Fourth and 8th grade reading achievement has surpassed the national and Southeast averages.[2]
- North Carolina, along with Texas, has posted the highest gains on math assessments from 1990-1996. Gains have placed North Carolina well above the Southeast average and at or near the national average for performance.
- SAT gains from 1988-1998 lead the nation, climbing 34 points and improving for the fifth year in a row. In terms of long-term gains, Oregon is the next closest state (25 points).
- The number and percentage of North Carolina students passing Advanced Placement exams in math and science is the highest ever. North Carolina was recently cited as

---

[1] North Carolina Department of Commerce. March 29, 1999.

[2] National Assessment of Education Progress.

leading the nation in improved achievement for minorities in mathematics, science, and engineering baccalaureate degree recipients.

- In *Education Week's* "Quality Counts" Report (1999), North Carolina was recognized as one of the two states closest to having all the components of a complete accountability system for students and teachers.
- In 1998, The National Education Goals Panel identified North Carolina as the state showing the most significant improvement during the 1990s, due to an increase in performance on 14 achievement measures.[3]

These statistical improvements are backed by additional results indicating a strong level of support from the citizens of North Carolina regarding their public schools:

- A statewide poll conducted by the University of North Carolina School of Journalism in November of 1997 found that nearly half of the respondents said their schools deserve a grade of "A" or "B." Less than 12 percent said schools deserved a grade of "D" or "F."
- North Carolinians overwhelmingly approved a $1.8 billion bond vote for school facilities in 1996, the largest in state history.
- North Carolina leads the nation in the number of teachers with National Board Certification.
- The passage of the Excellent Schools Act by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1996 has strengthened teacher accountability while earmarking over $1 billion in new funds to raise teacher salaries. As a result, the state has climbed from 43rd to 29th in average teacher salaries.[4]

Of special note is the dramatic change in school violence-related factors during 1993-1999. The rate of school violence in North Carolina's public schools has dropped 19 percent to 6.3

---

[3] "How Are North Carolina Public Schools *Really* Doing?" Public Schools of North Carolina. March 1999.

[4] Ibid.

incidents per 1,000 students. In addition, the number of guns found at schools has fallen 65% in recent years.[5]

North Carolina's success has also been the source of national interest. The National Education Goals Panel commissioned David Grissmer and Ann Flanagan to examine the factors that contributed to education improvements in two states: Texas and North Carolina. Both states have led the nation in gains on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) during the 1990s, and policymakers in Washington DC wanted to know what factors contributed to the significant improvements in both states.

**The Role of Business and Political Leadership in a Transformational Strategy**

Shortly after the election of James B. Hunt, Jr. as Governor of North Carolina in 1992, the Business Council of Management and Development called a meeting. The Business Council, comprised approximately 25 CEOs of the state's largest employers, issued a sharp directive to Governor Hunt regarding the state of education in North Carolina. Exasperated with "feel good yet do nothing" school-business partnerships that had little long-term impact on student achievement, the CEOs put the Governor on notice.

They were not ready to abandon public education — not yet. But they demanded that a long-term, comprehensive reform strategy be developed and were prepared to commit significant resources and in-kind support to transform the public schools. Governor Hunt took this directive as both a challenge and an opportunity. From improved teaching to strong standards and accountability, Governor Hunt was prepared to move forward with the necessary and ambitious reform agenda.

However, Governor Hunt also knew that for long-term reform to last there needed to be a systematic transformational management strategy that would encompass professional development, direction, and coordination of state-level policies and procedures. Governor Hunt

---

[5] Raleigh *News & Observer*. June 20, 1999; page 3B.

turned to the business community for help developing just such a strategy, realizing that many of their companies had been through similar transformations during the 1980s when businesses were forced to retool and reinvent themselves in the face of increasingly global competition.

The business community, through the North Carolina Business Committee for Education (NCBCE), gladly assumed the responsibility for helping with this strategy. After months of planning and preparation, a change management strategy was presented to the Business Council by NCBCE:

- Implement a four-year research and development (R&D) project using the Baldrige framework and quality management principles to determine the feasibility of applying these principles to public education.
- Create six pilot partnerships involving a local school system, a higher education institution, and a business partner all working together to improve student achievement at each site.
- Raise funds from the Business Council and other sources to fund the R&D effort.
- Develop a comprehensive reporting process to document accountability.

Under the direction of the NCBCE, the pilot effort began in 1993 and concluded in 1997. Annual reports were published each year, documenting both quantitative and qualitative data from each site. While each of the pilots chose varied paths for the journey towards continuous improvement, there were a number of similarities in all six pilots:

- **A focus on professional development.** Ninety percent of the funds raised to support the pilots focused on staff development for teachers, administrators, school board members, and partners. The importance of funding to support professional development in the Baldrige and quality arena was critical for success.
- **Commitment to a cross-functional leadership team.** The leadership team comprised various segments of the education, business, and local communities provided the support and focus for each effort throughout the four-year time frame.
- **A significant role for the business partner.** In every partnership, the stabilizing and motivating force behind a long-term commitment to the initiative came from the business

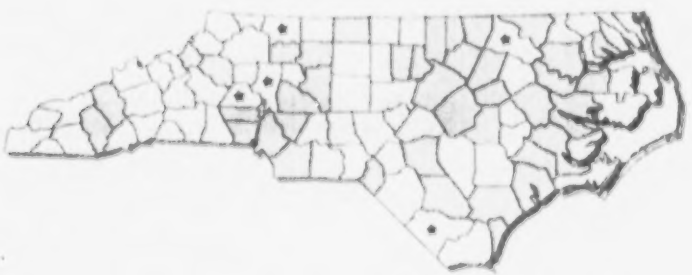
partner. As each partnership matured, the move towards self-assessment using the Baldrige framework became increasingly important. Ownership of planning, implementation, and accountability occurred through a formal self-assessment process.

Initially, funds to launch the initial R&D effort came from the business community, but as word spread about the positive impact of the effort on student achievement and employee empowerment and morale, the North Carolina General Assembly became interested. In 1995 the General Assembly appropriated $450,000 to expand the effort, by 1996 an additional twenty school systems were partners in the effort. General Assembly funding has continued since 1996, with the 1999 legislature approving ongoing funds.

Given the positive success of the R&D effort and the involvement of continued funding from the North Carolina General Assembly, the Business Council voted to create the North Carolina Partnership for Excellence (NCPE) to spread the Baldrige framework and quality principles to additional school systems in the state. The NCPE mandate was simple: to provide the same opportunities to implement quality principles to all school systems in North Carolina who desire to become involved (by the year 2002).

**The North Carolina Partnership for Excellence**

On September 1, 1997 the NCPE was formally created as a non-profit public-private partnership operating under a business-led Board of Directors. The mandate to add additional partners continued. From six pilot partnerships, partnerships have grown to a total of 45 across the state, representing approximately 70% of the total student population in the state (Fig. 1.1)



(Fig. 1.1)

The mission of NCPE includes two primary activities:

- To support and coach education systems to met or exceed customer requirements, and
- To support and coach organizations responsible for the alignment of education in North Carolina.

In addition to working with over 7000 educators/school board members/community members, NCPE has provided coaching and professional development for every employee in the Department of Public Instruction. This effort, combined with the formal training of State Board of Education members by the Pinellas County, Florida Quality Academy has dramatically impacted alignment of state policies with school systems, individual schools, and thousands of classrooms across the state. Pinellas County Schools personnel have provided an invaluable service to the State Board of Education and many of the school systems in North Carolina.

Historically, North Carolina has operated a state system of education similar to many others in the southeastern United States and other states in the country: the state set policies relating to every aspect of public education and required numerous reports about the implementation of these policies. Traditionally, the emphasis in North Carolina has been reporting on the implementation of programs but not on their results. As a result, few local educators had a clear understanding of the mission, vision, and goals of the state. Results were not important because reporting on implementation was the key to continued funding and accreditation.

The transformation of the state system of education took a dramatic change in 1995 and 1996. After the State Board of Education received Baldrige/quality training, the Board developed four Strategic Aims for the state system. Called the ABC's Plus, the four Strategic Aims became the reform initiative that focused on academic results in exchange for significant local flexibility:

1. High Student Performance
2. Safe and Orderly Schools
3. Quality Teachers and Administrators
4. Effective and Efficient Operations

For the first time, educators and the public across North Carolina began to grasp the mission, vision, and direction of the state system.

Paralleling the State Board of Education's strategic emphasis was the passage of legislation in 1995 and 1996 that dramatically changed both the role of the Department of Public Instruction and the reporting requirements of local schools. In short, new legislation was designed to create a more responsive agency that focused on results, not implementation. The move to local control based on accountability clearly replaced the traditional, top-down style of management that had been in place for years.

Of special note is the unique partnership that developed among the state's top policymakers. The State Superintendent, Mike Ward, and the State Board Chairman, Phil Kirk, have worked side-by-side with Governor Hunt to lead the transformation. Given that the State Superintendent is independently elected, while the State Board Chair is appointed by the Governor, the appointment of a Republican State Board Chair by a Democratic Governor underscores the unique partnership of the state's top education leaders. State Superintendent Mike Ward has been a key driver in the use of the Baldrige framework in public education. As a former superintendent in one of the original six pilot systems, he understood first-hand how quality management principles could help transform education. Unprecedented in the state's history, the active and bi-partisan role of top leadership has been critical to North Carolina's success.

**Arrows, Alignment and Accountability: The Use of the Baldrige Criteria**

The Baldrige framework exemplifies the importance of an aligned system working together for a set of common goals. In layman's terms, this is referred to as "connecting the arrows" to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. Moving from a disconnected system to one based on connected strategies, programs, and policies is the critical first step in achieving long-term high performance. (Fig. 1.2 – 1.3)

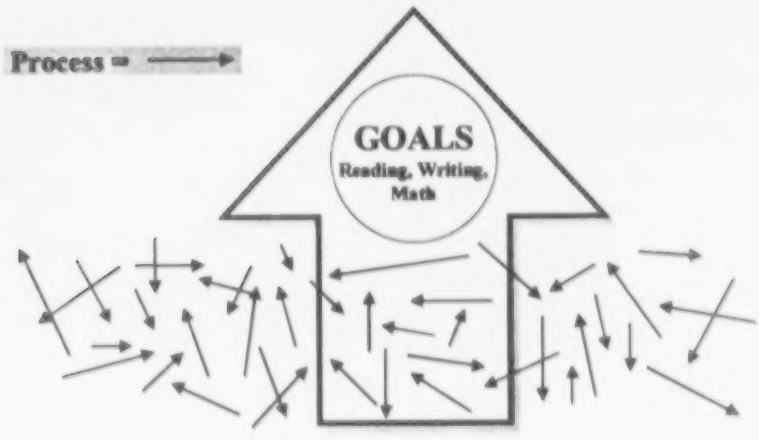
From the classroom to the boardroom, the reconnection of these often disconnected arrows is referred to as alignment. Using a professional development effort focused on the Aligned Management System (Baldrige criteria), thousands of educators and community members across the state are now "working smarter, not harder" and aligning their respective work efforts around the state's four major Strategic Aims.

(Fig. 1.2 – 1.3)

**Alignment**

## Disconnected Improvements

Vision: Every Student Achieving

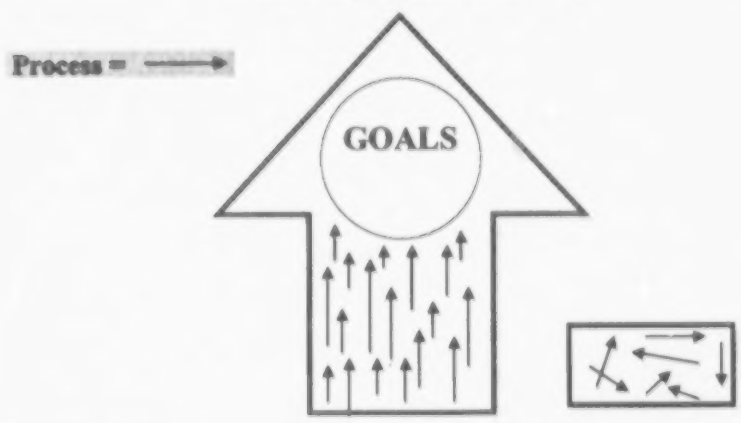



North Carolina Partnership for Excellence

**Alignment**

## Connected Improvements

Vision: Every Student Achieving




North Carolina Partnership for Excellence

These two components, the connection of the policy and procedural arrows and alignment, bring about a greater degree of accountability for student and employee performance. Instead of reporting on implementation strategies, North Carolina educators are now reporting on results — increases in student performance.

Professional development has been the key. During the R&D phase of the project, a multi-level set of professional development activities was created, piloted, revised, and refined. NCPE worked closely with the Department of Public Instruction, the university system, and business leaders to provide coaching and support. Teachers, administrators, and community members provided continuous feedback to improve professional development. For many local school systems now dealing with a radically changed public education system, this professional development has been instrumental to positive change for both educators and the community. Examples of professional development based on Baldrige/quality principles include:

- Awareness training: half-day to two-day awareness training for cross-functional teams
- Leadership training for administrators and future leaders
- School Board training: representatives of 35 school boards have received professional development in the Baldrige/quality arena
- Professional development for Department of Public Instruction staff
- Professional development for University Schools of Education
- Classroom applications: specific, hands-on tools and techniques to implement Baldrige/quality principles within individual classrooms
- Baldrige self-assessment training: advanced training for those partnerships prepared to begin the self-assessment process required by the North Carolina Quality Leadership Foundation (the state Baldrige examiner/award program)

While it would be inappropriate to single out the Baldrige framework as the primary factor responsible for North Carolina's education transformation, there is little doubt the efforts begun in 1993 have contributed greatly to North Carolina's progress in improving student achievement.

The student achievement results presented attest to the impact of Baldrige/quality in all 26 systems where multi-year data is currently available.

It takes all parts of a system operating well to bring about high performance over time. This is true in the case of North Carolina's efforts as well. From an education-reform champion like Governor Hunt, to state legislators and policy makers, to the business community working in tandem with educators, to the numerous policy and advocacy groups supporting education in North Carolina, it has taken courageous leadership, a focused agenda, and a willingness to support transformation.

### Conclusion

North Carolina has learned a variety of lessons that may be applicable to other education systems throughout the nation. As a "living laboratory" the state has learned a great deal about what does and does not work in change management strategies:

1) **Leadership is a necessary prerequisite for transformation.** Without strong leadership by the Governor, State Superintendent, State Board of Education, and General Assembly, the progress in North Carolina would not have been possible.
2) **"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything." —George Bernard Shaw.** One critical lesson is that change in education must be initiated from outside the educational organization. Despite best intentions, it is all but impossible to achieve long-term, systemic change without an outside source of support, focused alignment, and the infrastructure to support the changes envisioned. Requiring people within the system to change without outside assistance, support and coaching has not worked in North Carolina. With support, coaching, and assistance, change has been accepted and successful.
3) **"Doing your best isn't good enough if you don't know what you are doing." —W. Edwards Deming.** This lesson is so important that it is not unrealistic to conclude that asking people to handle new responsibilities is guaranteed to fail if they do not receive the necessary professional development and support.

4) **The role of the business community support is crucial as a catalyst for change.** North Carolina would not have made the progress it has made without the heavy investment of the business community. Playing the "blame game" creates friction, tension, and negative attitudes that hamper improvement. When business leaders changed tactics and stopped blaming educators for the failure of the system, reform began to take hold. This subtle change in the role of business made a huge difference. In fact, educators have clearly demonstrated a genuine respect for business leaders involved in this effort. Blame has been replaced with cooperation.
5) **Many inside and outside education underestimate the potential of teachers and students to achieve higher levels of performance.** Based on North Carolina's experience since 1993, students and teachers are much more capable than they have been given credit for in the past. With professional development, appropriate policies, and a focus on results, the state has enjoyed unprecedented performance improvements from both teachers and students. The creativity, passion, and performance of teachers and students have at times amazed even those with the most optimistic attitudes.
6) **The Baldrige framework and the professional development model created by the NCPE has been a key ingredient in supporting change management efforts.** The unique approach employed through the R&D effort has carried forward into the work of NCPE in 1999. This approach is based on the continuous improvement of professional development based on customer (participant) feedback. Using existing Baldrige and quality-based principles, the effort to help educators and community members understand the system has resulted in a model of high performance that makes sense to those involved. This approach, continuous improvement through customer focus, has been an important part of NCPE's success to date.

North Carolina is not satisfied with the progress already made. While the state has made great improvements, there is still a great deal left to be accomplished. Governor Hunt has challenged the state to a stretch goal that by the year 2010, North Carolina will be first in K-12 education in the United States. One key next step in the future is to maintain a focused, steady course of action based on continuous improvement. North Carolina is no longer in the business of

reinventing the wheel. Sticking to a tangible reform strategy is an important next step, with appropriate revisions being made as changing customer and societal factors come into play.

Another key step is to involve the higher education community in a more active role. From teacher and leader preparation to community outreach, the role of higher education is obviously important. While sometimes a difficult and often laborious process, the state cannot achieve its full potential unless all segments of the education system are operating in tandem.

Additionally, the NCPE will continue to work towards the goal of offering all voluntary partners coaching and financial support for change management. The role of business, the General Assembly, and state leadership will be important as funds are raised to continue to move the organization's mission forward.

All in all, many in North Carolina believe the state is on the right track. Success has been achieved during the 1990s, both educationally and economically. The future is likely to be even more demanding as the global economy becomes more competitive and complicated. Yet the investments in policies, salaries, infrastructure, and support that have been made during the 1990s position the state positively for the future. It will take the active role of all participants — business, policymakers, educators and community members — to continue the progress that has been achieved to date in North Carolina.

## BRAZOSPORT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (BISD):
## Implementation of the Quality Agenda to Ensure Excellence and Equity for ALL Students

*By Gerald Anderson*

### Introduction

*In 1997-98, Brazosport Independent School District (BISD) became the largest school district in the State of Texas to earn the highest rating of "Exemplary" by the Texas Education Agency. Also in 1998, BISD received the prestigious Texas Quality Award from the Quality Texas Foundation. BISD is the first and only school district in Texas to have ever received the award, which is modeled on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria. In 1998-99, the district again received the Exemplary rating from the Texas Education Agency. Because the TAAS scores of special education students and students taking the Spanish version of the test were included in the statewide averaging, this was a significant accomplishment. In June 1999, BISD applied for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and in August 1999 was named one of the 2 education finalists for the national award.*

### Background

Located approximately sixty miles south of Houston on the Texas Gulf Coast, the BISD is a Texas public school district serving a seven-city community of approximately 100,000 people. The student body consists of approximately 13,500 students, located at eleven elementary, two middle, three intermediate, one alternative, and two high school sites. The student population represents the diverse population of seven very different and unique communities. Nine campuses educate a large percentage of students living below the Federal poverty line (37% of BISD's students are considered economically disadvantaged), including children of migrant workers, single working parents, and those who are cared for by a guardian. The district's ethnic distribution is 57% White, 33% Hispanic, 9% African American, and 1% other.

BISD provides a quality teaching and learning environment for all learners, reflecting the district's dedication to high expectations, student performance outcomes, a consistent educational philosophy, technological literacy, equity, and fiscal responsibility. The district

consistently remains focused on increasing student achievement through a research- and standards-based Eight-Step Instructional Process (ESIP) supported by state-of-the-art technological tools.

BISD's 1999-2000 vision is *Exemplary and Beyond.* While "Exemplary" has a technical definition for purposes of the State's annual accountability rating, BISD's vision goes far beyond the State's system to touch every aspect of its operations: it challenges the district to go beyond normal performance expectations for public education to a level of performance and recognition never before achieved by a public school district. BSID leadership, faculty and staff, business partners, and community share this vision of excellence. Most importantly, the quality management process has taken the district beyond excuses for mediocre academic performance based on family background, ethnicity, or economic circumstance.

BISD believes all children can learn, given the proper time and resources. This belief gives the district confidence that all students can master the State's academic assessment instrument, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), with no significant differences in performance between demographic groups. Whether a student is White, Hispanic, African-American, rich, or poor the district is committed to providing the time and resources for that child to be successful. As the district's student performance results in Figures 0.1 – 0.3 illustrate, the district has made monumental strides toward accomplishing this goal:

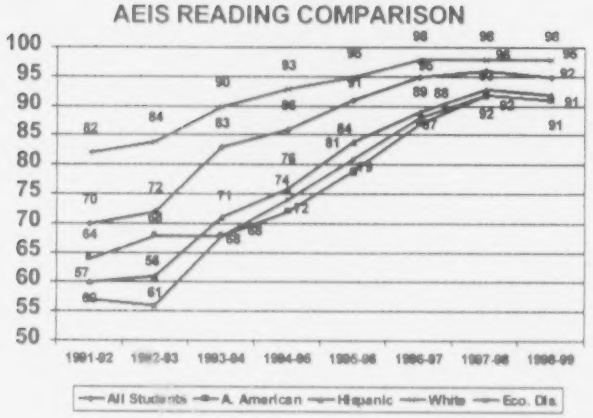



Figure 0.1

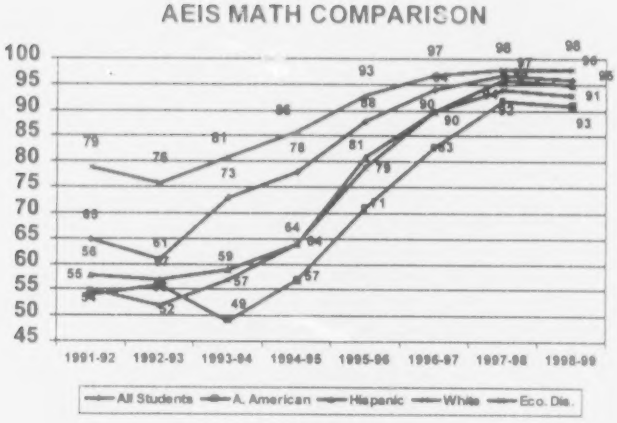



Figure 0.2

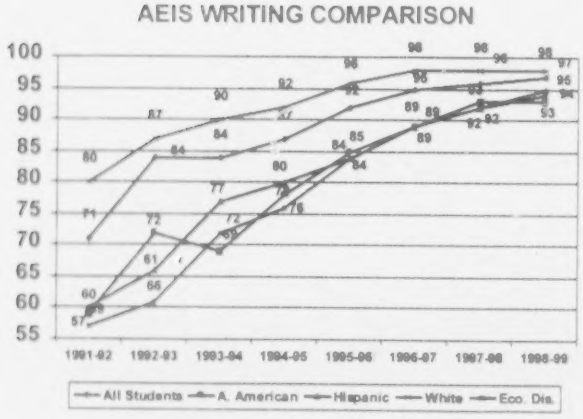



Figure 0.3



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**The Eight-Step Instructional Process (ESIP)**

The Dow Chemical Company first introduced BISD to the quality movement in 1991 when the Superintendent was invited to attend a workshop presented by Dr. W. Edwards Deming (see Figure 0.4). Total Quality Management (TQM) training began in the district for administrators and faculty in 1992-93. Shortly thereafter, the origins the district's Eight-Step Instructional Process (ESIP) was introduced at the district's poorest campus. A systematic instructional process that would propel that campus to State recognition the next year, ESIP lead the entire district to State recognition in 1995-96.

**Figure 0.4**

As a result of TQM and ESIP, BISD has traveled a long way in the past eight years (see Figure 0.4). In 1991-92, half of the district campuses performed poorly on the TAAS. In keeping with the TQM principle of examining data to find solutions, staff analyzed the TAAS results to develop an improvement plan. The data revealed that economically disadvantaged children, regardless of ethnicity, were not successful on the state assessment.

Teachers who were successful instructing economically disadvantaged children became the focus of the improvement plan. BISD discovered that these teachers were successful because their strategies continually measured each child's learning, and they retaught to ensure that students met the state academic standards. One of these teachers developed ESIP to ensure that she taught and her students mastered the state

standards as measured by TAAS. This process was then replicated as a two-year school-wide pilot. As a result of the significant increase in the scores of economically disadvantaged and minority students, the ESIP, or a variation of the EISP, was replicated in all BISD schools. All staff received extensive training in how to address various learning styles, convey high expectations for *all* students, engage in instructional focus modeling, interpret test data, engage in total quality management, and interpret effective schools research. Because teachers are always looking for ways to successfully teach all students, there was very little resistance to the process. The ESIP provided an overarching district plan and enabled all teachers to focus clearly on student achievement. The significant gains in student achievement during the first year of implementation ensured there was virtually no resistance in year two.

In retrospect, the decision to pilot this instructional initiative on one campus rather than district-wide proved to be a good one. Because all staff members were focused on improving student performance and worked together collaboratively as a team, they produced dramatic results. The results spoke for themselves and other schools enthusiastically adopted the process, ensuring that ESIP became a district initiative.

In all planning, the district utilizes the Shewhart Cycle, or the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" cycle of continuous improvement. Data is used to plan and implement new or improved programs and processes (or eliminate ineffective ones), and the resulting data is used to assess and accept, modify, or reject the improvement. Because of the success of all students, regardless of ethnicity or economic situation, the district has been invited to share the success of its ESIP throughout Texas and across the United States. The Superintendent and his staff willingly and enthusiastically share this process based on the belief that the BISD's responsibilities extend beyond the district to the larger community of public education. The district believes that quality results in schools come from quality processes that focus on increasing student achievement, and that the ESIP is an example of a quality instructional model that works.

As a result, BISD district staff has trained approximately one hundred school districts in Texas in the implementation of ESIP. Follow-up data indicates that in districts using the Plan-Do-

Check-Act process dramatic results have been achieved. This process ensures that educators teach and students achieve the standards set by various states.

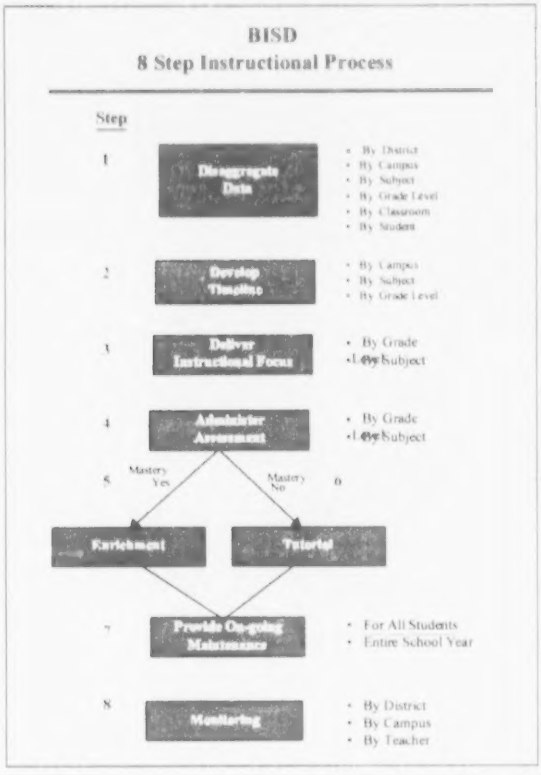



Figure 0.5

The success of the ESIP (Figure 0.5) begins with step-one: disaggregating the data. TAAS categories are broken down by student grade level, ethnicity, economic status, as well as an All Students group. Ethnicity is broken down into White, Hispanic, and African American sub-populations. Economically disadvantaged students are defined as those students who qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. The All Students group includes the average of all test takers from all of the sub-populations. From the data areas of student/class strengths and weaknesses are determined in order to make sound instructional decisions. The most basic skills and ideas not achieved are retaught continuously throughout the year. Campuses continue with the ESIP by developing instructional timelines and calendars.

In complex quality organizations, what is measured is what gets done and BISD is no exception to this rule. Needs and priorities for comparative information and data are determined by what will support best practices and quality standards (Figure 0.6). Information and data are constantly solicited from other educational organizations, best practice literature, internet resources, educational research results, and evaluations by independent organizations. The Texas Education Agency (TEA)

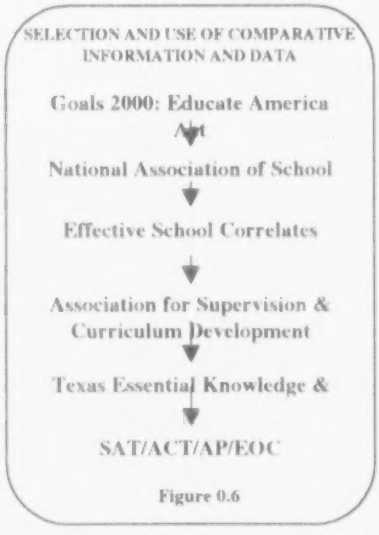

SELECTION AND USE OF COMPARATIVE INFORMATION AND DATA
Goals 2000: Educate America Act
National Association of School
Effective School Correlates
Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development
Texas Essential Knowledge &
SAT/ACT/AP/EOC

Figure 0.6



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

provides the main framework for high standards through an Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report. This AEIS report provides comparative data that policy makers, district and campus educators, and the public can use to evaluate how well public schools in Texas are performing. From the AEIS data, campus and district performance levels are used to determine one of the following four ratings:

- ***Exemplary*** for both campuses and districts
- ***Recognized*** for both campuses and districts
- ***Acceptable*** (campuses)/*Academically Acceptable* (districts)
- ***Low Performing*** (campuses)/ *Academically Unacceptable* (districts)

Comparative information from the State is used in campus and district planning set to stretch targets, set goals, and support overall school performance improvement. The district has found that effectively sorting out and communicating this data is the key to using the data for improvement. Measurement is regarded as our springboard to improvement and is an essential element in identifying quality opportunities, initiating corrective actions, setting priorities, evaluating progress, and defining targets to improve upon. Proper use of measurement has led to long-term, continual improvement. The District continually challenges itself to improve its programs, services, processes, and relationships.

The test results provide a snapshot of individual student performance to examine areas in which further diagnosis is warranted. The results also provide a "level playing field" for comparing the performance of BISD campuses with surrounding school districts and the State of Texas.

Data analysis is conducted each spring when district TAAS results are received. Data is disaggregated by the following student groups: All Students, African American, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, Special Education, and Spanish TAAS results. Data is

disaggregated to show strengths and weaknesses by objective for each subject area and by grade level to identify target areas for improvement. The District's goal is to show continuous improvement year-to-year in TAAS scores. The Eight-Step Instructional Process ensures that all students have the opportunity to master learning objectives. One of the key elements in the Eight-Step Instructional Process is "detailed data analysis," as in Figure 0.7. "TAAS Talks" between teachers and students are evaluative conferences about testing strengths and weaknesses. The process is very structured and strictly adhered to. This ensures that quality instruction and learning takes place on all campuses and in all BISD classrooms.

BISD Eight-Step Instructional Process
Receive TEA Data Diskette
Study Teacher Summary Report
Label Student Instructional Groups
Prioritize TEK Target Objectives
Develop Instructional Focus
Develop Calendars/ Timeline
Schedule Formative Assessments
Schedule and Develop Tutorials and/or Enrichments
Develop a Yearly Maintenance & Monitoring Plan (TAAS Talks)
Figure 0.7

To ensure that quality instruction and learning takes place from the law to the classroom, in all BISD schools and classrooms, the following Eight-Step Instructional Process is strictly adhered to:

1. **Disaggregation of Test Scores** - Each spring, TAAS results are disaggregated by student group to identify objectives that require improvement. The district's goal is to show continuous improvement year to year in TAAS scores. Data is prepared for each teacher over the summer break and is delivered to teachers by the beginning of the school year. Timely and efficient delivery of the data is a critical part of ESIP.
2. **Development of Instructional Timeline** - Texas identifies essential learning for all students. Using this as a base, teachers throughout the district develop a timeline for teaching each of these skill areas. Time allocations are based on the needs of the student groups and the


90 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

difficulty of the objective. Effective instruction begins by knowing what students need to learn, what teachers need to teach, and how long mastery will take.

3. **Delivery of Instructional Focus** - Using the developed timeline, an instructional focus sheet stating the objective, target areas, instructional dates, and assessment dates is disseminated and followed by each teacher. By looking on the calendar, BISD knows the objective teachers are focusing on now and during what time period other objectives will be taught. The district sets the expectation while the teachers determine how to fulfill it.
4. **Assessment** - After the instructional focus has been taught, teachers administer a commercially prepared assessment. Eighty percent of students must master an objective before teachers move on to another target area. Shorter, more frequent, assessments allow teachers to detect and correct problems early. If students do poorly on a particular objective, additional teacher resources are provided, such as bringing in an instructional specialist to help the classroom teacher.
5. **Tutorials** - Students who fail an assessment attend small tutorial groups devoted to the reteaching of non-mastered target areas. Teachers in all grade levels and areas of certification provide tutorial or TAAS remediation activities both during and after school and on Saturdays. Computer lab time is also provided where necessary. Additionally, vertical and horizontal teams of teachers and staff ensure seamless transitions for students moving between grade levels and schools.
6. **Enrichment** - Mastery students attend enrichment classes during tutorial time. At the intermediate and high school levels, mastering the basics is a requirement for taking electives. This practice (which parents highly support) has served to motivate students to take their studies seriously and focus on mastering the learning objectives.
7. **Maintenance** - Materials are provided for on-going maintenance and reteaching of objectives, ensuring students retain what they have learned. It also helps teachers quickly spot students who need additional instruction. Economically disadvantaged students who need more structure when learning and more reinforcement of objectives have especially benefited from this practice.

8. **Monitoring** - Principals visit classes daily during each session of instructional focus in order to monitor progress and drive home the BISD message that learning is the primary purpose of school.

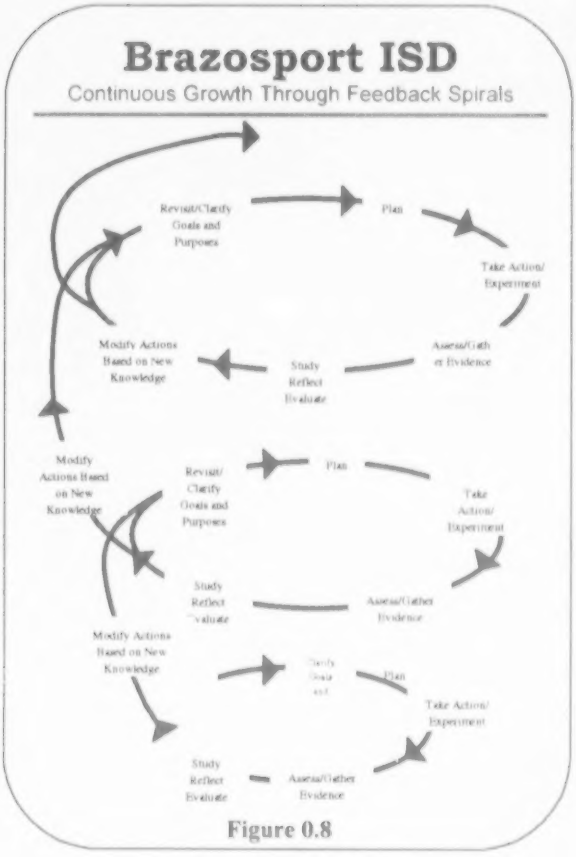


**Figure 0.8**

General Electric CEO Jack Welch said, "If the rate of change inside an institution is less than the rate of change outside, the end is in sight." BISD constantly monitors change, systems thinking, teaching, and learning through a model of continuous growth through feedback spirals (Figure 0.8).

## Conclusion

The TQM system and the ESIP have resulted in a mutually agreed upon focus on student performance. BISD believes and consistently communicates to its teachers and staff that quality must be defined as students achieving established standards and all students can achieve exemplary standards. The accolades the district has received the past several years have been rewarding; however, the true reward is that the staff knows they are doing a better job teaching



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

students and truly believes that they can teach all students. Quality management process, effective schools research, and ESIP are the foundations for success for all students in BISD.

In keeping with the TQM continuous improvement philosophy, BISD has continuously improved the ESIP process. BISD teachers now believe that they can teach all students and that all students can learn. As result, high expectations permeate the district and the ESIP has resulted in BISD reporting the highest student performance scores in the state of Texas, receiving an Exemplary rating for the second straight year, the largest district in the state to do so.

The next BISD goal is to fully achieve excellence. The district believes the goal of equity has been met because over 90% all students and each student demographic group have mastered the state assessment. With equity achieved, the district's next step is to achieve excellence, meaning all students will achieve mastery of all TAAS objectives. The ESIP has helped the BISD staff believe that all children can learn and that we can teach all children.

## HUNTERDON CENTRAL REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL:

### Using the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Whole-School Reform

*By Raymond P. Farley*

**Introduction**

Hunterdon Central Regional High School is a four-year, comprehensive public high school situated on a campus-style development. Hunterdon Central is situated in a regional school district, Hunterdon Central District, and is the only school in the district. It has its own Board of Education that operates independently of its feeder districts.

Hunterdon Central is committed to creating a culture of excellence in which its students, faculty, staff, and administrators continuously evaluate and improve their performance and one that promotes lifelong learning and high academic achievement for all students. It is a school district focused on systematically developing the capability to turn an already good school into a school of excellence, to move the district's vision into daily practice.

A commitment to excellence and continuous improvement has been the key to the increasing success of our students, the professional growth of our faculty and staff, and the significant recognition and benchmark status the district has achieved over the last six years. Hunterdon Central has received the highest recognition from the United States and New Jersey Departments of Education, honored once as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and three times as a State Star School. In 1997, Hunterdon Central was recognized by Quality New Jersey with its *Partner Award* for performance excellence and leadership, based on the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award* education criteria for the state. In 1998, the district earned the state's highest quality recognition as the first district to receive the *Governor's Award for Performance Excellence*, based on the same criteria. This recognition is due largely to Hunterdon Central's systematic response to the needs of its students who, as its principal customers, face growing demands on their problem-solving and learning skills as they approach the competitive worlds of higher education and the global workplace of the 21st century. Hunterdon Central's quality

policy commits the district to provide students with the resources necessary to support a culture of excellence:

- **District Vision**—*Hunterdon Central is committed to a diverse curriculum that fosters lifelong learning in a changing global society.* A dedicated and committed Board of Education works closely with a visionary superintendent, a highly credentialed administrative team, and a talented faculty and support staff to lead the district to accomplish its stated mission.

**District Mission**—Hunterdon Central exists to support, encourage, and enable every student to be a lifelong learner within a system that aligns all resources to ensure that every student achieves at his/her highest level.

**District Quality Policy**—Quality Systems and Service for Quality Learning

### Background

Hunterdon Central is experiencing a period of development and expansion and is currently in the top quarter of schools in the state based on existing enrollment figures. The school entered a newly constructed forty-classroom complex this year that has addressed the current and projected increase in number of students. Funds for this project were approved by our taxpayers two years ago based on the development of long-term plans developed with systematic input from employees, students, and the Board of Education. Models and Educational Testing Service research from our four prototype classrooms, developed two years earlier, were used to establish design basic requirements.

Hunterdon Central is a recognized leader in the use of technology in the educational setting. No school in the state, and few in the country, can compare to its quality of resources, level of research and development, and diversity of staff training used to support the transition of teacher from lecturer to facilitator and passive learner to active learner. Numerous awards and high student achievement attest to the positive impact technology has had on the district's educational services. Hunterdon Central's active search for partners to support technology and its ability to improve the efficiency of its other services has allowed the district to shift funds away from many other areas and apply them to the classroom. The diversity of the curriculum and the

students' ability to access resources twenty-four hours a day separate Hunterdon Central from its competitors and provide its students with the advantages of more individualized learning opportunities that develop their skills to move decisively into their post-secondary experience.

Hunterdon Central actively seeks partnerships in an effort to support its research and development efforts used to improve the quality of the teaching-learning environment and to prepare students to enter the 21st century. The district seeks partnerships to provide the human and financial resources that support systematic improvement and financial prudence. Finally, the school seeks partnerships to benchmark best practices, measure gaps, share successes, and identify opportunities to contribute to the continuous improvement of educational services worldwide. The following list of current district-level partnerships represents collaboration with six foreign countries, five large businesses, and numerous colleges and universities:

- AT&T Learning Foundation; New York, New York
- AT&T Virtual Learning Academy; Basking Ridge, New Jersey
- Community of Agile Partners in Education
- Global Knowledge Exchange (GKE); Wayne, New Jersey
- Asbury Park High School; Asbury Park, New Jersey
- Cordoza School District; Washington, D.C.
- Partners in Distance Learning
- Joint Transportation Partnership
- Osceola School District; Osceolo County, Florida
- Union City High School; Union City, New Jersey
- Compaq Computers; Houston, Texas
- Comweb, Bridgewater; New Jersey
- Columbia University; New York, New York
- Rider University; Lawrence, New Jersey
- School Alliance Insurance Fund
- Tegrity Project-Israel

Active student-centered learning has become the rule at Hunterdon Central. Faculty facilitate students' self-directed learning and operate a resource-rich learning environment. As the catalyst for change, the district must support its faculty with the training necessary to master the new technological tools and pedagogy that support active learning.

The Educational Technology Training Center (ETTC) is the outgrowth of faculty and staff needs as well as the mandates of the District Mission and Vision. Over time it has become a state model for professional development. It offers a diverse curriculum that provides faculty and staff with the opportunity to develop job-specific and lifelong learning skills. Connections with other colleges, universities, and business training programs are available on-site, online, or off-campus. Courses on technology basics and advanced applications are available, as well as courses on alternative forms of performance assessment and peer evaluation models for the classroom. To further a culture of excellence, faculty members are released from the classroom to develop innovative approaches to student-centered active learning, leading to expertise and the ability to share new knowledge as an instructor in the ETTC. Course evaluations are part of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) improvement cycle and address the current and future needs of ETTC participants. Participation and survey feedback is summarized and reviewed with the assistant superintendent following each trimester. During the annual review process, evaluation results are analyzed and improvement strategies recommended. This model has been used to expand similar services to all twenty-one counties in the state.

Shared Governance is reflected in Hunterdon Central's Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC) structure. The Steering Committee is composed of four faculty, one staff member, one supervisor, two student-elected representatives, a community volunteer, and the principal. Their primary functions include budget and staffing oversight and management of the Action and Ad Hoc Committees. Action Committees are standing committees that focus on the improvement of the basic annual processes of the district. The Ad Hoc Committees are assembled to address short-term issues or gather research outside the focus of Action Committees.

Hunterdon Central's commitment to TQM is embodied in its District Mission. The district has

embarked on an organizational transformation that is directed at successfully deploying the principles of continuous improvement at every level. To that end, Hunterdon Central engages in annual self-assessments using the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award* criteria and the implementation of the award's valuable feedback. For example, the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle has resulted in a change from the traditional school day to a block schedule, yielding the following benefits:

- Measurable improvement in course assessments and standardized test scores;
- Increased student participation in the Shared Governance model of Shared Decision-Making;
- The district-wide alignment of aims and goals at every level;
- Better use of financial and physical resources;
- Greater accessibility to data for all process managers and interested parties; and
- More effective tools to gather data, analyze, and apply information.

**Educational Philosophy**

Hunterdon Central has an overall educational philosophy that promotes a wide range of learning experiences that are guided by the district's commitment to a diverse curriculum. This curriculum provides courses and programs that address the needs of the varied interests and ability levels of the district's students for whom it designs its services. Examples of how Hunterdon Central responds to its students' need for a diverse curriculum include the following:

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available in English, psychology, economics, calculus, biology, chemistry, physics, German, French, and Spanish;
- Individualized programs of study are available for all students who demonstrate a need for special services to help them achieve at their highest level;
- Nationally recognized regional cyberspace programs connect Hunterdon Central students with other districts, colleges, universities, and resources across the state, the nation, and the world. Hunterdon Central has developed classroom opportunities to learn about other cultures, respect and honor diversity, and develop the skills to work collaboratively in the creative process;

- Alternative classroom settings support students who demonstrate high-risk behaviors that hinder their progress in the mainstream curriculum and classroom;
- Course offerings in seven world languages introduce Hunterdon Central students to other cultures and help prepare them for the global workplace of the 21st century;
- English as a Second Language (ESL) programs provide non-English speaking students with the guided learning experiences they need to function successfully in mainstream classrooms;
- A broad range of electives address students' needs in the areas of English, social studies, business, family and consumer sciences, art, music, physical education, performing arts, and design technology;
- A complete array of required courses prepare Hunterdon Central students to meet state graduation requirements, college placement standards, and to acquire the skills necessary to compete in the workplace;
- A nationally recognized technology program fosters innovative courses that help students develop the skills of active-learners and master technology as a tool for lifelong learning;
- A nationally recognized Library Media Center provides students, community, faculty, and staff with the resources to connect to the rest of the world through the internet and is accessible anywhere at any time;
- Courses in all disciplines offer students a project-based curriculum for life that engages them by addressing real world problems and issues that impact their daily lives and their futures. Hunterdon Central offers courses in which students' mastery is assessed in a variety of formats, including individualized portfolios, multimedia presentations, and community projects; and
- Counseling services help students to identify their short- and long-term life goals and design strategies to move decisively and successfully into post-secondary education. Group and individual counseling opportunities combined with connections to community counseling services connect students and families to appropriate external resources.

**Student Profile**

Hunterdon Central provides a full range of services appropriate to students in grades nine through twelve that are in line with the graduation requirements of the State of New Jersey. As a regional school district, Hunterdon Central serves students from four independent K-8 school districts (its feeder districts). In September 1998, the enrollment at Hunterdon Central was 2,164, 115 students more than the previous year's enrollment of 2,049. This reflects the steady growth at the elementary level over the past four years. The student population is composed of 14% classified students receiving special services as defined by state code, 1% limited English proficiency students. Eighty-five percent of Hunterdon Central students are on a regular mainstream schedule.

At the same time the student population has been growing, Hunterdon Central has demonstrated a steady increase in the percent of graduates attending two- and four-year colleges and other forms of post-secondary education, reaching a new four-year high of 91% in 1998. The district's focus on life-planning goals designed by the Counseling Services Department has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of students graduating undecided about a post-secondary direction, dropping to a four-year low of 4% in 1998, down 9% from the prior year.

Hunterdon Central has replaced the traditional high school schedule with a new daily schedule of 84-minute blocks of classroom instruction, four times a day (a block schedule). The Hunterdon Central dropout rate has been consistently lower than the state average for that same period.

**Student and Stakeholder Requirements**

Hunterdon Central's stakeholders are our students, parents, taxpayers, community, businesses, faculty, staff, public education, colleges, universities, alumni, and funding agencies. As a result of in-house and third-party surveys of student and community groups over the last five years, Hunterdon Central continues to find similar requirements, needs, and expectations expressed by our customers and stakeholders. In general, we find they have these five needs in common:

- Quality instruction/instructors
- Responsive services/good communication

- Safe learning environment
- Challenging, current curriculum
- Employment or college acceptance upon graduation

Taxpayers, businesses, Hunterdon Central employees, and suppliers also require a fiscally prudent management processes that increasingly move more dollars into the classroom and less to other aspects of operations. The district's private and public sector partners, as well as its funding and granting agencies and organizations, require an accountability system that reflects clear goals supported by measures of results both in the classroom and the annual audit summary.

**District Strategic Aims**

In response to these key needs and in line with our District Mission, Vision, and Quality Policy, Hunterdon Central developed the five District Strategic Aims below:

- Highest Student Achievement in the State
- Safe Learning Environment
- Partnerships
- Highest Performing Workforce
- Integrated Management Systems

Each of these aims is fleshed out by a series of annual goals measured by results at every level of this organization, including the district, department, and individual faculty/staff improvement plans. These goals are monitored on a biannual basis and more frequently where appropriate. Each level of the organization systematically receives and/or periodically solicits specific forms of feedback from stakeholders and students to help articulate the trends in progress towards achieving its annual goals. Hunterdon Central calls this process of alignment its District Linkages.

**Meeting State Requirements**

The New Jersey Department of Education and the State Board of Education identify and mandate the graduation requirements for students in all public schools in the state and define the monitoring process to measure how each school district is doing in relationship to the graduation criteria. There are eight elements to the state monitoring process:

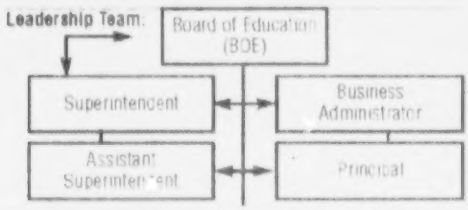
- Quality Assurance
- School Planning
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Pupil Performance
- Pupil Behavior
- School Resources
- Teaching Staff/Professional Development
- Mandated Programs

Hunterdon Central is the first school in the United States to be monitored and approved for the highest level of accreditation by a state agency using *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award* criteria. Based on these criteria, the State Board of Education granted Hunterdon Central a waiver from the traditional monitoring process for a seven-year period. The district was the prime mover and driving force behind the introduction and passage of legislation creating the first state law that would allow a school district to elect the Baldrige criteria as an alternative to the traditional state monitoring processes. Advocates of this alternative are monitoring the success of this legislation that they expect will demonstrate that this alternative process will not only ensure compliance with the minimum state requirements but provide a structure for creating cultures of excellence that move schools beyond providing only minimum educational services.

**Leadership System**

Hunterdon Central's Leadership System is designed to engage key stakeholders in the development and deployment of the District Vision, Values, and Aims at every level of the organization. The structure and function of each aspect of this Leadership System is captured in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1 Leadership System - Structure and Function**




- Meets weekly to review daily operational issues and progress on District initiatives
- Defines District vision
- Identifies District initiatives essential to achieve vision, Aims
- Defines annual goals
- Gathers data to anticipate emerging stakeholder needs
- Articulates/collaborates with shared decision making steering committee

**Senior Administrative Team:**

- Director of Curriculum
- Director of Information Systems
- Director of Plant and Facilities
- Counseling Services Coordinator

- Meets monthly with leadership team to review operational issues and progress on District/department initiatives
- Meets bi-monthly with administrative team to coordinate planning
- Shapes strategies for deployment of annual District goals and initiatives
- Establishes targets and indicators for annual goals and initiatives
- Manages reviews, analyzes and reports on measures of results for annual District goals and initiatives
- Participates on key SDM committees
- Recommends improvements

**Administrative Team:**

- All Department Supervisors
- All Vice Principals
- Athletic Supervisor
- Transportation Director

- Meets bi-monthly with senior administrative team to discuss operational deployment and strategic concerns and plans
- Aligns department goals annually with District aims, vision
- Communicates District goals and initiatives to department solicits suggestions, concerns, feedback
- Manages, reviews, analyzes and reports on measures of results for annual department goals
- Recommends improvements in strategic planning, deployment, measures
- Works in concert with each staff/faculty department member to identify and align individual improvement goals with District aims annually
- Reviews, analyzes, and reports measures of results on each Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) suggesting improvements in annual evaluations

The district Leadership Team monitors the school's ability to meet all five District Strategic Aims (DSAs), through its Shared Decision-Making (SDM) governance structure. This unique administrative structure is facilitated by the SDM Steering Committee, comprising the principal, whose participation is constant, as well as elected members including four teachers, two students, one administrator who serves on the Administrative Team, and one support staff person.

The Leadership Team uses stakeholder feedback from the Board of Education, the annual Block Educational Attitude Survey, student performance summaries (both formative and summative), the State Report Card comparative data, and measures of the results of the annual district goals to identify improvement objectives, human and financial resources, and assess the progress in key indicators of success.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The analysis of data is essential to district decision-making and it evaluates the processes used to gather data and the measures of results. This evaluation process is completed by the Senior Administrative Team, which sets targets and identifies the essential data to be used to measure results. Each member of the Senior Administrative Team manages critical processes impacting the achievement of one or more of the five DSAs. The Senior Administrative Team reports monthly to the Leadership Team on the district's progress toward each goal and the measures of results used to determine the success of the critical processes they manage.

The data used to evaluate and improve the Leadership System are clearly visible at the Administrative Team level and include:

- Quarterly data on student performance in each course by teacher is provided by the Information Systems office;
- Articulation data from each of the sending districts drive content and curricular design;
- Standardized tests scores influence course improvements;
- Student feedback on courses and program selections facilitates program design;
- Feedback from individual staff/faculty to department supervisors regarding in-service needs or training is used to plan at the department and district level annually;
- The PDSA cycle of improvement is used at all levels of the Leadership System and deployed into the SDM and department levels to drive improvement efforts.

To further enhance leadership commitment to Integrated Management Systems (IMS), the superintendent appointed a supervisor to oversee the district's TQM training for faculty, staff, and students. The supervisor also implements the ISO 9000 standards in the district's workplace management system and benchmarks manufacturing and small business management processes. Benefits from these initiatives are seen in cost savings in business operations, plant and facilities services, and transportation partnerships. TQM has also helped Hunterdon Central improve its process flow charts that build agreement and communicate the steps in each of the district critical processes.

### Strategic Development Process

Hunterdon Central employs a strategic planning and deployment cycle that engages all levels of the organization in annual and long-term planning. The Leadership Team revisits the District Vision annually, refining and refocusing district goals. Using annual feedback from student and stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and process and performance data, the Senior Leadership Team prioritizes the needs of the district and the key elements of the Vision that address these needs.

In 1995, the planning process identified the five DSAs (noted above) that are standard from year to year and are derived from the platform of the three district initiatives. These aims are further refined into annual goals and measures of results. Each of these DSAs has been aligned with the key elements of the District Vision and Mission as well as national, state, and international educational goals. The Annual Planning Process now focuses on reviewing progress and defining improvement strategies to address goals for each of these DSAs.

In 1995, Hunterdon Central further refined this planning process by implementing The District Linkages Planning System, shown in Figure 1.2, used to ensure alignment with these aims at the department and classroom level. Annual department goals and measures of results and each faculty and staff member's individual Professional Improvement Plan are used to measure results.

**Figure 1.2 District Linkages Planning System**

| Alignment Tool | Alignment Process |
|---|---|
| **Level I.**<br>**District Strategic Plan, Overview** | District Strategic Aims, Goals and Results Indicators of our success at the District level. Defined by the Leadership Team. Results of these goals will be reviewed annually by the Leadership Team |
| **Level II.**<br>**Department Action Plan** | The Department Goals and Results or Indicators of success that will support the District Aims, Action Plans designed by the Department Supervisor and Planning Teams to address the annual Department Goals |
| **Level III.**<br>**Individual Teacher Action Plan - PIP** | The individual teacher will design a plan based on the Professional Improvement Plan in the Annual Evaluations. These PIP's will align with the District Strategic Aims and Departmental Goals. Each PIP will have a measure of results that is reviewed annually or bi-annually with the Department Supervisor |

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The alignment of each of these levels of strategic planning helps the district to focus its resources on the accomplishment of our District Vision. The quality supervisor produces an annual summary of the number of department and individual faculty and staff goals that are aligned with each DSA. This summary is reported to the Leadership Team and trends are discussed to help align necessary resources. These resources may include finances, facilities, equipment and supplies, staffing and release time, teacher training and workshops, technology, and technical support.

The district planning and review process is ongoing and monitored throughout the year. It begins during the summer when the superintendent and the Board of Education members participate in an off-campus retreat to set annual goals for each of the five DSAs, based on Leadership Team, Senior Administrative Team, and Administrative Team annual reviews and results. The superintendent conveys these annual goals to the Senior and Administrative Teams during the annual Administrative Review and to the general faculty through his address and District Vision tape on opening day. Annual goals are then fine tuned at the administrative, Shared Decision-Making (SDM) committee, and staff/faculty levels as the planning begins for the implementation of strategies. Departments develop their own action plans for implementation and align them with the DSAs. Supervisors review Professional Improvement Plans with each teacher and staff member, aligning individual action plans with departmental goals and DSAs. These action plans are reviewed quarterly as part of the planning process and performance review system. Summaries are recorded in the annual report submitted to the Leadership Team and made available to the public.

Hunterdon Central uses student and stakeholder feedback to guide its strategic development decisions and resource allocations. The district systematically solicits feedback using the following tools:

- The **District Educational Attitudes Survey** is administered annually by an SDM Block scheduling committee;

- The **District Climate and Satisfaction Survey** is administered every two years by the Gordon S. Black Corporation. CSM PACT survey is sent to all students, parents, faculty, staff, and administration;
- The **Departmental and Course Surveys** are administered quarterly, each semester, and annually and are facilitated by department design teams or individual course instructors;
- **District Focus Groups** are facilitated by the principal, external monitors, and a public information officer;
- **Department Focus Groups** are facilitated by department supervisor or design team;

Student and stakeholder data are trended, reviewed by process managers, analyzed, and reported to the Leadership Team or department supervisors. The Leadership Team receives summary reports annually and as needed to monitor district goals. The annual report is prepared by all members of the Leadership System and reflects the progress and improvements of the district at every level. Process reviews are completed monthly at Senior Administrative Team meetings with the superintendent.

State and Federal regulations and requirements reflect external mandates that drive program delivery. All instructional departments use these mandates to develop departmental goals and future initiatives. For example, the State of New Jersey Department of Education has outlined a series of core content standards for all required subject areas. Student mastery of these standards is to be assessed on the new form of the High School Proficiency Tests used to determine graduation eligibility. These new standards have been used in the curriculum design process for all subject areas affected. Hunterdon Central's goal is not just to comply with these minimum mastery levels, but also to identify opportunities to move towards higher academic achievement.

**Knowledge of Student Needs and Expectations**

Hunterdon Central maintains an awareness of the general and special needs and expectations of current students in several ways:

- State Department of Education requirements for graduation based on the Core Content Standards, Early Warning Test (EWT), and High School Proficiency Test (HSPT).

Results are reviewed and trended annually at the district and department levels and sent to district articulation meetings. Information is used to drive program design.

- Student performance reports summarizing student achievement in each course each quarter by teacher, department, and grade level. Course instructors and department supervisors review results quarterly. The Leadership Team reviews summaries annually. Summary trends are used to drive improvements in the areas of course design, delivery, and content.
- Student performance summaries on standardized tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and AP tests, and online college credit information are reviewed by counseling staff when students develop their current and life goals. The Leadership System uses this information to trend student achievement and drive new course design and current course improvements.
- The State Report Card annually provides comparative feedback in twenty-two categories that profile students' performance, attendance, safety, dropout rates, mobility, and graduation rates in comparison to state means and schools of a similar socio-economic category (called District Factor Groups).
- The Shared Decision-Making (SDM) Scheduling Committee facilitates the Block Educational Attitude Survey each year. This committee is charged with gathering, analyzing, and reporting on the impact of the block schedule on the teaching-learning environment and the performance and attitudes of our students, faculty, and staff. The results include both qualitative and quantitative data as well as an analysis of total responses, group responses, and written comments.
- The third-party CSM PACT satisfaction and climate survey, administered every two years, is used to provide information on student, parent, and faculty/staff satisfaction with school atmosphere, facilities, quality of instruction, shared governance, administration, communications, job satisfaction, overall satisfaction, transportation, curriculum, and training. The Leadership Team uses these data to establish goals for the District and Leadership System. Departments use results to identify gaps or establish focus groups and follow up surveys to help clarify responses and create more actionable data. Responses are segmented by parent, staff, faculty, student grade level, and gender.

All scores were compared to an impact index identifying priorities most likely to create the greatest improvement in satisfaction. Supplemental data were provided to help the district compare the responses on each question with the mean score of all other high school respondents.

- All students are given a technology survey by the Information Systems Office to identify the extent of technology used in each subject area, the technologies used most, and student satisfaction with access and application to the learning process. This information is used to refine technology plans for the district and specific subject areas. An annual review is presented to all members of the Leadership System and is included in the annual report. The SDM Technology Committee uses these data to develop long-term recommendations on technology use, replacement cycles, new purchases, and emerging technical support needs.
- Results from the Distance Learning Plan and alternative course initiatives are used to identify emerging uses of technology. The Leadership Team uses this feedback to allocate resources and improvements in the long-term plan. Results are presented to the entire Leadership System at the Annual Review and are cascaded to the classroom teacher at the department level.
- An assigned member of the child study team constantly monitors the Individual Education Plan for each student receiving special services. Student performance is reviewed frequently and is required at least twice a year. Plans are accessible online by the faculty to help support each student school-wide.
- The Educational Testing Service completed three-year studies of new learning environments and the impact of the application of technology on learning. These studies included student survey feedback and focus group responses to the "perceptions of the learning environment" on learning. Specific results on how technology has been used for instruction have been used by the Leadership Team to guide the design of the prototype classrooms, the new forty-classroom addition to the school complex, and to design classroom instructional strategies.
- Subject area articulation meetings produce curriculum-specific data on areas of academic strengths and weaknesses. Articulation meetings have produced partnerships with each of

the K-8 feeder districts and provide a two-way flow of information on emerging needs and current performance trends. This information is used by departments and feeder districts to redesign their program training for teachers and the long-term goals for the districts.

- The Instructional Media Center is the hub of information resources for Hunterdon Central students. A variety of technology is used to provide students with online services and extended hours give greater opportunity for on-site access. A survey has been completed for each of the last three years to identify current uses. The results are summarized, analyzed, and reviewed by the Leadership System, SDM Technology Committee, and Instructional Media Center staff to generate suggestions for improvements.
- Interviews with college representatives, military, and business recruiters occur each year to assist the district in identifying new expectations, trends, and requirements that impact its students. Data on student scholarships, acceptances, job placements, and enlistments are trended and reviewed annually. Information is correlated to the State Report Card results and summaries are shared with the Leadership System. Counseling Services use these data in their life-planning model to help students move decisively to a post-secondary placement.
- Surveys are completed at grade eight to determine student interest in activities and athletic teams. This information is trended and reviewed by the athletic director, activities coordinators, and SDM Activities Committee to determine current and future allocation of resources and program improvements. Results from the CSM PACT survey reflect the satisfaction level of current students. In addition, dropout rates are reviewed to identify potential areas for concern. The Leadership Team reviews these results in the Annual Report.

The primary focus on evaluation at Hunterdon Central is to improve instruction and student performance, which addresses DSAs one and four. During 1997-1998, as the faculty aligned their personal goals with department goals and the District Strategic Plan, the purpose of careful personal planning clearly reflected "why we do what we do." This process continues to drive

improvement in how the district addresses the needs of its students and the community. In 1998-1999, this process is clearly a tool for understanding and sharing how each individual contributes to the successful achievement of each DSA and the District Vision.

Support staff also receives annual evaluations focusing on the improvement of services. Professional Improvement Plans (PIPs) are designed to address department goals. When a problem is identified as a result of the evaluation, the focus is on improving the process rather than the person, resulting in improved services and student performance. Short surveys are used to gather feedback on district and school services from stakeholders.

The School Report Card, is issued annually by the State of New Jersey, is used by the district to benchmark the twenty-seven performance factors identified by the state as important to the success of every school district. Those schools in the same socio-economic group, or District Factor Group, are used as a source of comparative data in each category.

Students' class work, grade point averages, and standardized test scores indicate how well district students are achieving. Hunterdon Central students' average grade point average has risen steadily since 1995, going from an 83.9% to an 86.85%. SAT scores have shown upward trends except for last year, and always exceed state and national averages. English courses have been redesigned to include more writing and reading skills in all courses at each grade level. In terms of state testing, 100% of the district's regular education students have passed the High School Proficiency Test or its equivalent since its inception in 1994-1995.

Professional staff is evaluated against guidelines established in New Jersey Education Code 18A. Each staff member's PIP sets annual improvement goals correlated with the DSAs. Students meet annually with counselors to set and review career and individual program designs. Aggregate data on student achievement, graduation, college acceptance, workforce participation, military enrollment, behavior management patterns, and overall school success (New Jersey State Report Card) are collected, analyzed, and reported to stakeholders. All of these measures show positive trends and the impact of counseling services on life planning.

State- and national-level quality reviews are employed to judge the effectiveness of school programs. In each case, applications and detailed site visits are used to make quality judgments. Hunterdon Central has received recognition as a federal Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and has been recognized three times as a New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Star School. The school has received nine NJDOE Best Practice Awards and the Social Studies department was recognized in 1997 as a National Program of Excellence by the NCSS. The American Association of School Librarians selected the Instructional Media Center as the Library Media Center of the Year 1998.

**School Performance Results**

Hunterdon Central's highest priority is reflected in its District Strategic Aim (DSA) one, Highest Student Achievement in the State. The following measures are used to define progress in the student achievement goals related to DSA one:

- District identified assessments
- Honor Roll and Principal's Honor Roll statistics
- Practice High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) for sophomores
- New Jersey State HSPT
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
- Advanced Placement (AP) tests
- Exit surveys
- Misconduct reports
- Daily attendance

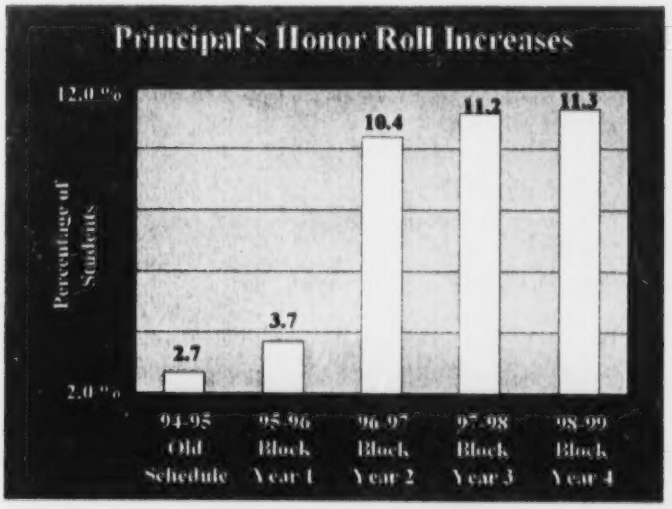
Comparative data for most of the measures listed above can be found in the State Report Card where information is available for each school district as well as the state means for all districts. The State Report Card is published yearly by the NJDOE to report on student achievement statewide. In addition to test scores, the Report Card also provides information about district finances, teacher/administrator staffing, class size, attendance, dropout rates, and graduation types and data. This information is accessible through the NJDOE web site at

http://evalsoft.com/NJ or in hard copy from individual school districts. Information is further separated by DFGs. Mean DFG scores are reported on the Report Card along with the state mean score in each of the twenty-seven categories.

Improvement in daily student performance is reported quarterly and is one of the district-identified assessments to measure student achievement. Levels of mastery are summarized in a numerical grade range. All students who attain a grade of 93% or better in all courses that quarter are named to the Principal's Honor Roll. Figure 1.3 shows the number of students named to the Principal's Honor Roll by academic quarters each year for the last four years.

What is noteworthy about these numbers is the dramatic change between 1995-1996 and 1996-1997. Both the educational attitude and CSM PACT surveys indicate that the increase in the total number of students each quarter is directly related to the move from a forty-eight-minute, eight period, traditional schedule to an eighty-four-minute, four block schedule. When the district examined these numbers in the form of the percentage of the total number of students named to the Principal's Honor Roll each quarter, the upward trends depicted in Figure 1.3 emerged (charting by percentage of students allows the district to account for fluctuations in student enrollment from year to year).

**Figure 1.3**




District results on the HSPT significantly impact course design and remediation strategies in the English required and elective programs. Department design teams have developed four strategies to establish a greater emphasis on



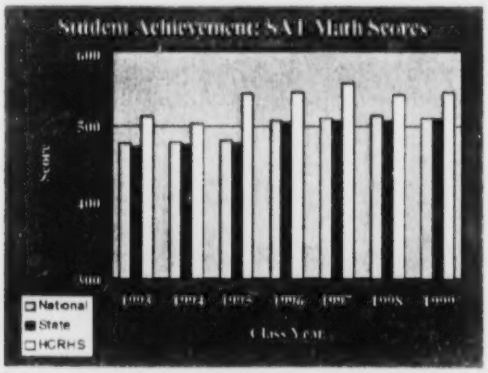
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

writing skills and more effective use of the new writing labs.

Comparative data on the results of the HSPT math test indicate that Hunterdon Central consistently exceeds the state average. The district's percentages of students passing the test on the first try also exceeds the DFG averages and both Hunterdon Central and the DFG schools show a consistent upward trend over the last three years. Hunterdon Central's average passing score for math has also consistently gone up despite the steady increase in enrollment. In writing, comparative data again show Hunterdon Central consistently exceeding state averages since the test's inception. When compared to the DFGs, Hunterdon Central exceeded those scores for three out of the four years.

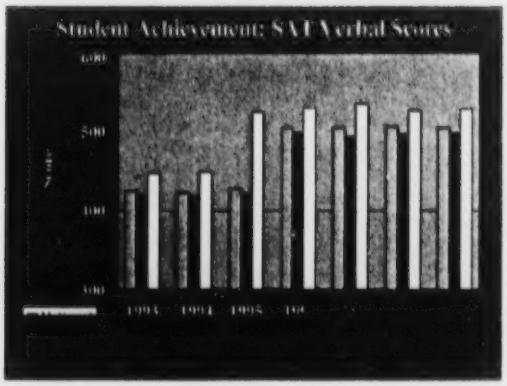
District data break down the percentages of students in regular education and those in special education who passed the HSPT on the first try and the average scores they earned in each of the four years of the test. This break down helps the district to design specific programs to address the different needs of these students. The data clearly reflect positive trends for both subgroups. The number of students taking the test and the percentage passing continues to rise for both regular education and special education students. Hunterdon Central's special education population is increasing and our exemptions from the HSPT are going down, making it essential to track their progress in this area. The results indicate the average scores for regular education students are at an all time high on each area of the test. Improvement in the percentage of special education students passing the test indicates the success of the district's addition an in-class support for special education students.

**Figure 1.4 a**




BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**Figure1.4 b**




Figures 1.4 a and 1.4 b reflect the upward trends in student performance on the SAT. Math and verbal scores are well above the state and national averages and reflect a clear jump following the transition to block scheduling in 1994-95.

## PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (PCSD):
## Working to Build a High Performing Workplace

*By Ken Rigsby*

### Introduction

When a Florida state senator toured Azalea Elementary School, she saw mission statements and goals posted in the third and fourth grade classes she visited. One of the students asked her if they had goals for the legislature? She said, "I think so. Yes, we do." The student then asked if they had a mission statement. She replied that they did not. The student said, "How can you have goals without a mission?"

A visitor to a first grade classroom at Rawlings Elementary School saw the reading goals posted on the wall. He asked a student if those were the teacher's goals or the students' goals. A young boy raised his head with a puzzled look and said, "Why, of course, those are our goals. Our teacher already knows how to read!"

These scenarios depict the culture that is developing rapidly in Pinellas County School District (PCSD) among students, teachers, and staff. From the boardroom to the classroom, a quality culture is the foundation on which students and staff work together to build a high performing workplace.

### Background

PCSD is a large, urban school district located on the Gulf coast of Florida in the Tampa Bay region. PCSD is the seventh largest district in Florida (out of 67) and the twenty-third largest district in the nation (out of 16,000). It educates more than 110,000 students in 82 elementary schools, 23 middle schools, 16 high schools, five exceptional education schools, four exceptional education centers, three discipline centers, 28 alternative education centers, and two charter schools. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredits all PCSD high schools and postsecondary centers.

Of the 110,000 students enrolled in PCSD, 76.11% are White, 18.49% are Black, 2.58% are Asian, 2.69% are Hispanic and .13% are classified as other. The district employs more than 18,000 people in full- and part-time positions. The average teacher-pupil ratio is 1:23 for kindergarten, 1:23 for grades one through three and 1:28 for grades four and five. The average teacher-pupil ratio for middle and high schools varies according to the class.

Major catalysts for change in PCSD include several key events beginning in 1991, following national and local milestones:

- The Florida Legislature passes the Education and Accountability Act requiring active involvement of parents, guardians, business people, and other community members in school improvement and accountability efforts.
- All Florida schools initiate School Advisory Councils.
- PCSD adopts a quality management philosophy.
- ATT Paradyne trains top district and teachers' association leadership in Total Quality Management (TQM) principles.
- PCSD partners with ATT and Florida Power & Light (Deming Prizewinner) to apply best practices and facilitate the use of TQM for school improvement.
- PCSD wrote a self-study application and received the Governor's *Sterling Award* for quality.
- Business/community leaders and PCSD agree to establish the Quality Academy to facilitate the transformation process of the school system

PCSD establishes strategic planning partnerships with the following people and organizations:

- Dr. J. Howard Hinesley, Superintendent
- The School Board of Pinellas County
- Senior Pinellas County Schools Management
- Pinellas County CEOs
- Pinellas Business Community at Large
- Over 5000 school based partnerships (1999)
- Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association
- NEA National Center for Innovation
- Tampa Bay Total Quality Management Network, Inc.

- Over 300 major community organizations
- University of South Florida
- Pinellas County Education Foundation
- Over 700 companies

Initially, central administration officials determined that three initiatives were essential for quality management strategies to be implemented in the school system.

1) PCSD formed a District Quality Council to ensure a common vision and constancy of purpose. The Council integrated quality strategies with existing components of the PCSD comprehensive planning system.

2) The PCSD Collaborative Quality Council piloted a collaborative bargaining process. The council's members — the superintendent, deputy superintendent, quality coordinator, president of the teacher's association, executive director of the teachers' and support services' union, and the president of the county council of PTAs — worked as a unit to develop collaborative decision-making and collective bargaining processes that kept the focus of the system on improving student achievement. Including the union in the beginning stages of the quality movement was critical to its success. Working together on mutually established short- and long-range goals allowed the management and labor to come to early settlements in the bargaining process.

   Because there is a distinct philosophical and legal conflict between the concepts of school-based decision-making and traditional collective bargaining, any change in the terms and conditions of employment must be negotiated with the affected labor organization prior to implementation. Under Florida law, each new initiative generated at the individual school level requires the board and the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association (PCTA) to negotiate the impact of that change on employees. Not only does this situation make the process cumbersome, it undermines the basic notion that decisions can be made more effectively at the local school level without centralized control.

As a result of the Collaborative Quality Council, District leadership and the PCTA agreed to use their quality training to redesign the bargaining process for the 1993-94 academic year. In the spring of 1993 both parties trained their respective bargaining teams in the basic fundamentals of quality processes and allowed the teams to discuss ways in which these processes could be employed in collective bargaining. In May the district and PCTA participated in a joint training session, agreeing to develop a vision, a mission statement, and a set of values and belief statements as the foundation for what the teams hoped to accomplish as a result of using this new process.

Symbolically, the first round of training took place at round tables with members of both teams working together, dispelling the old concept of teams talking across tables to reach agreement. As the training progressed, the participants began to realize that the issues that were normally brought to the table during collective bargaining were not unique to either group but were common issues that if resolved would improve instruction and student achievement. This realization reinforced the idea that working together to solve major issues would enhance the system much more effectively than just tampering with the small isolated problems that came to the table each year. As the training continued, it became evident that the two bargaining teams had become one team with a common focus.

As with any change, the participants had to feel comfortable that the final product would still pass the legal requirements for ratification of a labor agreement pursuant to Section 447 of the Florida statutes. The document began to take on a new look as the old articles, sections, and subsections were replaced with a set of short- and long-term strategies that addressed major educational issues. Many of these issues are now resolved by creating cross-functional teams that work throughout the year to identify necessary data on each issue and to develop specific strategies to make improvements in the areas identified.

As a result, trend analysis, flow charts, and Pareto charts have taken the place of the typical proposals and counterproposals seen at the bargaining table. The investment of financial and

human resources in the process has enabled collective bargaining to become a cooperative strategy focusing on those issues that truly make a difference in education in Pinellas County. As both parties focus on the optimization of the system the traditional concept of a collective bargaining contract has been redefined as a shared set of mutual goals and objectives created by the board and its employees.

The establishment of long- and short-range strategies to address major educational initiatives has set the stage for more effective ways of working together for continual educational improvement, including a compensation study team and an employee evaluation team. The compensation study team continues to work on the goal of aligning all Pinellas salaries, identifying some short-range goals based on the comparability study that was done throughout the state. These goals include phasing in a common pay system for all support personnel, increased hourly pay in the instructional unit, additional School Office Clerks to fifty-eight elementary schools, and increased shift differentials and substitute rates. Also, an employee evaluation team has studied many different evaluation systems in an attempt to develop an employee assessment process that aligns to quality principles. The team uses evaluation instruments based on the Baldrige criteria as the basis for assessing strengths and opportunities for improvement in the individual employee. This format is used from the superintendent's office to the classroom, creating an aligned system of evaluation.

3) The third initiative involves continuous quality management training at all levels of PCSD. The district, in collaboration with the business community, established a Quality Academy to support training.

**Quality in Departments**

From PCSD central administration to individual schools, the district is firmly committed to the continuous improvement of systems and work processes through the use of the Baldrige criteria and quality tools. Departments throughout PCSD central administration including architecture, data processing, finance, purchasing, transportation, maintenance, accounting, research, and warehousing are in various stages of their journey.

Departments begin with two full days of cross-functional training that is followed up by additional training and support on an ongoing basis. The training has helped many departments increase their efficiency and become more customer focused. For example, the central files staff processes requests for information from more than 70,000 current and former students' files. Since implementing quality processes, about 95% of requests are processed the day after they are received, compared to 80% before staff members began implementing quality processes.

**School-Level Quality**

Each school has a School Advisory Council comprising parents, business leaders, administrators, and teachers. The councils develop the annual school improvement plan based on concrete goals to move each school toward reform objectives. Council members are trained to use quality process tools to continually assess their progress in relation to the plan's quality objectives.

**Student-Centered Efforts**

All efforts in PCSD are student-centered. Students are taught processes to continually assess their learning progress based on clear objectives. PCSD officials use student performance standards developed by the Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability, the Secretary of Labor, and members of SCANS as well as collect survey data from the business community to develop world-class standards to measure student performance.

**Total Quality in Action**

The district opened its first school developed within a total quality environment in the fall of 1992. The school, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Elementary, does not teach and administer in the "same old way." It is a model for reform in action for the district and the state. Before the building was even completed, teachers began learning quality management strategies and their training has continued, with them spending an afternoon each week in quality management seminars. The Rawlings focus on district-wide outreach has resulted in advanced learning across the district, using research and development to produce new best practices that focus on

developing a supportive learning environment and supporting high academic achievement for all students.

PCSD's second total quality-based school, Joseph L. Carwise Middle School, opened in the fall of 1993. The school has abandoned the traditional methods of school organization, integrating all grade levels in all buildings. Students remain in the same building each year in order to build and reinforce a sense of belonging. At its inception, the administration and staff determined that there would be no departments or department heads and no department budgets. Instead, each teacher is a member of a team and has a specific role to play on that team, and each teacher is given his or her own budget.

These schools are just two examples of how the journey towards quality processes has become the dominant culture in the district. These processes have brought the district closer to its goal of graduating more motivated learners who can become productive members of a global economy.

**The Quality Academy**

The Quality Academy was created in 1994 with to lead the transformational efforts of the district. The mission of the Quality Academy is to facilitate districts' transformation to high performing educational systems that align all resources to ensure that students achieve at their highest level and to provide research and development for the application of the Baldrige criteria to education.

As a result of comprehensive work in North Carolina, Florida, and Minnesota, the Quality Academy has received national attention as a catalyst for educational reform at the state level. In 1998, the Quality Academy began to offer a national Train-the-Trainer Certification and Licensing Program. Over fifty trainers from across the country, representing district, state, and national initiatives, have been involved thus far. The process begins with four days of extensive, application level training in quality concepts and Baldrige linkages, one day of on-site experience with Integrated Management Systems (IMS) practitioners, and a complete set of trainer materials, including transparencies, manipulatives, and videos. Participant materials are

provided as well. The training can be modified or customized to meet the specific needs of any large educational organization.

Currently an alliance has been formed among the Quality Academy, the National Education Association, the National Alliance of Business, the North Carolina Partnership for Excellence, and the American Productivity and Quality Center. The current goal of this alliance, called *BiE IN* is to establish Baldrige–based education initiatives in five pilot states. National strategies such as this exemplify the depth and range of influence the Quality Academy has had on education reform. Through the leadership of the Quality Academy, the National School Board Association and the American Association of School Administrators have endorsed the Baldrige framework as essential for education reform. The Quality Academy was invited to present a pre-session on Baldrige criteria implementation at the 1999 National School Boards Association Annual Meeting in San Francisco and provided statewide leadership training in the use of the IMS for the Florida School Boards Association in February 1999. The Quality Academy continues to coach and train nationally as school districts and organizations adopt the Baldrige framework.

The Quality Academy is located at the Pinellas County Schools Administration Building, 301 4th Street SW, Largo FL, 33770 in the Quality, Employee Learning, and Planning Systems Department. The Academy staff is comprises an Executive Director, Supervisor, six Trainer/Consultants, and three full time support personnel. The services provided by the Quality Academy to PCSD, other school districts, state offices, and professional organizations include the following:

- **Strategic Planning**—These sessions use a strategic planning process that involves cross-functional participation and a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle of feedback and improvement. A specific set of measurable strategic goals, aligned to a district aim and mission, are designed to support student achievement in a safe learning environment.
- **Use of the Integrated Management System (Baldrige) in Education**—These two- or three-day sessions are designed to equip educators with the tools they need to create, support, and manage a system of high performance in the school or classroom. Analogous sessions are available for non-instructional personnel.

- **Classroom Learning System**—These two- or three-day sessions are designed to focus on the specific criteria necessary to support a system of high performance in the classroom, bringing the Baldrige criteria to the individual teacher and student level.
- **Integrated Management System Immersion**—This five-day session is designed to deepen knowledge and application of quality concepts and Baldrige criteria, including one day of on-site experience with IMS practitioners.
- **Examiner Training**—This two-day session is modeled after state level Baldrige-based examiner training. It provides a complete review of a case study is required, developing in participants an in-depth knowledge of Baldrige criteria, self-assessment, and feedback processes.
- **Train-the-Trainer Certification and Licensing**—The Quality Academy offers a national Train-the-Trainer Certification and Licensing Program. The process includes four days of extensive, applied training in quality concepts and Baldrige linkages, one day of on-site experience with IMS practitioners, and a complete set of trainer materials, including transparencies, manipulatives, and videos.
- **School Board Retreat**—This two-day session is designed to build awareness of the use of the Baldrige criteria in education. Strategies and tools to support policy makers in the use of a Baldrige-based decision-making and consensus process are examined and applied.
- **Leadership Retreat**—These two- to three-day sessions are designed to examine the role of leaders in an integrated management system, differentiating between strategic and operational responsibilities as well as how to develop efficient and effective human resources systems.

PCSD's transformation has successfully overcome many barriers since the beginning of its quality journey:

| Barriers | Addressed |
| --- | --- |
| • PCSD data collection systems were not aligned at the district, school, and classroom levels. People didn't know what information they needed before they used a Baldrige-based system that demands management by fact; therefore, systems were not in place to provide that information. | PCSD provided:<br>• District-wide Baldrige leadership awareness training to align data to the goals of the organization;<br>• Training in data collection and use; and<br>• District Management Information Systems and Instructional Technology Departments are coordinating efforts with Curriculum & Instruction to provide necessary timely data to schools and classrooms. |
| • There was a disparity in technology available at various PCSD sites. | • PCSD designed ways to use an internal district web site to hold application programs too large for older computers but accessible by them |
| • PCSD had little time available for teacher training. | • PCSD coordinated district and school resources to provide summer and evening on-going training for Class-room Learning System Cadre schools |
| • PCSD Teacher of the Year criteria were not aligned with the Baldrige criteria. | • PCSD developed and implemented Baldrige-based criteria for Teacher of the Year selection. |
| • PCSD personnel evaluations were not aligned with the Baldrige criteria. | • PCSD aligned all district level evaluations with the Baldrige criteria. |
| • PCSD could not agree on how or whether to implement merit pay. | PCSD:<br>• Aligned teacher evaluation to Baldrige criteria for all CLS Cadre members;<br>• Made merit pay optional for other teachers until 2003; and<br>• Instituted a "Pay for Performance" instrument in cooperation with the Pinellas County Teachers Association. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | PCSD: |
| • There was a variation in Baldrige knowledge as new people were hired.<br>• It was difficult to keep up with the demand for updated information. | • Implemented Train-the-Trainer workshops so districts can train new people;<br>• Expanded the Quality Academy web site to allow more people nationally to access updated Baldrige application ideas; and<br>• Revised training booklets & materials. |
| | PCSD: |
| • There was a variation in entry-level participant knowledge at trainings | • Developed more in-depth pre-training surveys;<br>• Developed wider variety of levels of activities for trainings; and<br>• Participants have more choices and realistic time allotments for to complete various levels. |
| • It was becoming more difficult to meet the demand for in-district training | • PCSD added process observers (in-district trainers-to-be) to local trainings. |
| • It was becoming more difficult to meet the demand for translation of the Baldrige criteria to the classroom level | • PCSD developed the Classroom Learning System Cadre and information book |

High academic achievement for all students is the ultimate goal and reason for transforming the current education system. PCSD student achievement results indicate that the quality initiative in Pinellas County has been successful:

- PCSD nationally normed standardized test scores have been above the national average in all subject areas since 1989.
- PCSD has posted some of the highest scores in the state for writing tests every year since 1993.
- Of all school districts in the state, Pinellas County ranked first on the Florida Writing Assessment, grade 4; ranked second on the Florida Writing Assessment, grade 8; and tied for first on Florida Writing Assessment, grade 10.

- The percentage of PCSD students at or above grade level exceeds expectations on the mathematics section of the CTBS, grade 7.
- Average SAT (college entrance) performance score for both verbal and mathematics and the average ACT composite score exceeds the average for the State of Florida and the nation.
- The percentage of grade 11 students passing the mathematics portion of the High School Competency Test exceeds the state average.

Similarly, the most current student achievement data shows promising trends for schools and classrooms using IMS, Azalea Elementary School & Rawlings Elementary who are currently receiving data analysis assistance from the University of South Florida:

- Continuous improvement strategies have produced dramatic increases (up to 30 %) in standardized test scores despite low socio-economic levels and special education students
- Referral and suspension rates are decreasing

Expectations are for continued increases in achievement as use of IMS at the classroom level expands from 28 school cadres trained in 1998 to 46 cadres trained in 1999. More than 30 additional schools have had some training.

**Next Steps**

The journey towards quality management has been an exciting one, characterized both by bumps in the road as well as smooth sailing. We know that the journey is continuous. As PCSD's deployment of quality management processes deepens, several next steps have been identified:

- **In-District**—To have Classroom Learning Systems (CLS) Cadres functioning in at least 84 PCSD schools with 56 of those cadres completing roll out to their full faculties.

**Approach**

- ❖ First cadre 98-99 rolls out to full faculty 1999-2000
- ❖ Second cadre 99-00 rolls out to full faculty 2000-2001
- ❖ Third cadre 2000-2001 rolls out to full faculty 2001-2002
- ❖ Collaborative bargaining has targeted 2003 as full implementation
- ❖ CLS Assessment is currently in use for "Pay for Performance"

- All PCSD schools (146) will use the IMS format this year for school improvement planning.

  **Approach**

  - ❖ Training sessions are planned throughout the year for PCSD school teams to work with the refined IMS format

- All PCSD district departments will fully implement IMS based on the Baldrige criteria.

  Approach

  - ❖ Training sessions are planned throughout the year for district teams to work with the Baldrige criteria.

- Increase the number of PCSD schools and departments using higher-level assessments including SQC and Sterling, Florida's state quality award program.

**Approach**

- ❖ Provide additional resources and support for PCSD schools and departments
- ❖ Encourage and support visitations to high performing schools
- ❖ Increase the number of SQC Examiners trained and available for feedback to schools and departments
- ❖ Examine and improve all PCSD's operations
- ❖ Apply for the Malcolm Baldrige Education Quality Award

- **Out-of-District**—Increase the number of school districts trained in Baldrige criteria nationwide, and increase the capacity of the Quality Academy to continue to provide training for new PCSD employees.

**Approach**

- ❖ Continue to participate in national conferences
- ❖ Continue to expand our training efforts

- ❖ Continue to expand the national Train-the-Trainer program
- ❖ Continue to update materials and make them available nationwide
- ❖ Continue to develop and expand the Quality Academy web site
- ❖ Continue to organize and host the Superintendent's Forum as a national Baldrige conference

PCSD's on-going partnership with the Honeywell Foundation has provided the necessary funding for the Quality Academy to build school level capacity in order that schools become accountable for continuously assessing and improving student performance. Two of PCSD's most recent developments in building capacity include:

- Train-the-Trainer workshops to increase the number of people certified to deliver Baldrige-based training
- Classroom Learning System training to incorporate a self-assessment model based on the seven Baldrige criteria into classroom level planning

**New Products:**

- Classroom Learning System (CLS) self-assessment and training materials
- National Train the Trainer Process and materials
- Certification and Licensing Process
- School Board Use of IMS

**Revisions of Six Training Booklets:**

- Integrated Management System Components
- Linkages
- Transformation
- School Improvement
- Results

## Conclusion

PCSD has come to know that continuous improvement is a journey, not a destination. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of students that have passed through our doors and walked our corridors, the journey will continue.

## PITTSFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (PCSD):

### *Excelsior Award* Winner and Role Model for Excellence

*By John O'Rourke*

**Introduction**

The Pittsford Central School District (PCSD) is located in a residential suburb of Rochester, New York. The district currently serves nearly 6,000 students in five elementary schools, one middle school, and two high schools and has a history of high academic expectations and a record of support for quality education. Generally, students are highly motivated and successful, while parents have long demonstrated their interest and active involvement in the schools' activities and operations. In addition to participating in decision-making at all levels, parents and other community residents provide approximately 80,000 hours of volunteer work in the district's schools each year.

Since its creation in 1946, PCSD has realized its goals of academic and personal excellence for the young people of the school district as well continuous improvement through systematic, participatory planning. This planning has helped PCSD to manage its rapid growth and expansion in the 1960s and early 1970s and the gradual decline in enrollment of the 1980s. The 1990s have seen an increase in enrollment that has occasioned a major reorganization of PCSD elementary schools. Currently, a major study is underway to document increasing enrollment, the need for new technology, the achievement of new educational standards, as well as to examine current and future students' needs.

**Background**

In 1988 and 1989, assisted by members of the community, business leaders, and an outside consultant, PCSD developed a formal strategic planning process using total quality management principles and practices. A committee, comprised of 60 parents, teachers, school administrators, union representatives, and members of the Board of Education, was established to work on the initiative. Additionally, the district had access to the resources of The Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and the major companies located in Rochester that had direct experience with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award model. Over time, the district developed its own

Baldrige influenced model for strategic planning and assessment, which became known as the Strategic Issues Management System (SIMS).

Representatives of RIT, Bausch and Lomb, Kodak, and Xerox shared their knowledge and experience in utilizing total quality management techniques and the Baldrige model. Additionally, the district took advantage of its own training center, BOCES offerings and the PTSA for training in specific areas. Initially, implementing the Baldrige system was awkward and cumbersome. Many educators found it difficult to apply a business management model to education, and some perceived the entire process as an imposition of the Board of Education and district leaders. Critical to the Baldrige approach, deploying the system demanded the participation of key constituency groups. Over time, with training and increased familiarization with the concepts, the resistors were brought on board.

**Applying for *The Excelsior Award***

By 1992, the basic structure of the SIMS was in place, although in practice it was still somewhat fluid. That same year PCSD hired a new superintendent whose challenge was to take the already high achieving district and make it even better. As luck would have it, soon after assuming his new position Mr. O'Rourke learned about *The Excelsior Award* (now known as *The Governor's Award for Excellence*). Believing the application process itself would provide an objective audit of the district's management system, the superintendent approached his administrative staff with the concept and they decided to apply.

Throughout the 1993-1994 academic year, PCSD used the Excelsior process to conduct a self-assessment to gather information for its formal application. Responsibility for the seven criteria categories was divided among administrators and the union president, each of whom developed the their respective sections. They then worked together as a team to reach consensus on the contents of the full application. As part of the application process, PCSD also participated in a site visit from Excelsior examiners, but the district did not win the award.

Disappointed, the district realized it had much to learn from the application process. O'Rourke and his team took the findings in the Excelsior Feedback Report and identified four major opportunities for improvement:

1) to integrate its management system fully throughout the district;
2) to mature the district's use of data as the driver of continuous improvement;
3) to intensify it's focus on the customer; and,
4) to take further steps toward involving everyone in the management processes.

As hundreds of copies of the Feedback Report were distributed within the district and the community, the superintendent encouraged stakeholders to read and comment on its observations.

Over a two-year period, PCSD worked hard, using the Excelsior/Baldrige model to address the four targeted areas of improvement. The district again applied for *The Excelsior Award* in 1996. In so doing, it further developed the process used two years before. Committees, rather than individuals, were assigned develop responses to the seven criteria categories. As was the district's practice in so many other key processes, administrators, members of the Board of Education, teachers, support staff, union representatives, community leaders, students, and parents participated on the committees. As a result, hundreds of people had input in to developing the district's second Excelsior application Once again, the district participated in a site visit from Excelsior examiners, this time winning *The Excelsior Award.*

**The Journey Continues**

Since winning the award, PCSD has been working to cascade its assessment and improvement processes to the local level, including eight school buildings. Each building replicates on its site the District Planning Team (DPT), the body that has responsibility for monitoring the Key Result Measures of the district's Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP). This thoughtful, analytical approach to school improvement is centered around the district's core mission to improve student achievement. At the school level, the teams are chaired by the principal and are drawn from parents, teachers, and staff. The teams develop their own CAP under the auspices of the DPT, which oversees a focused and well-coordinated effort for the entire district.

### Impact and Results

The PCSD Mission includes the expectation that the district will "...provide experiences which maximize the student's academic, artistic, social, emotional, and physical development." The district's CAP is aligned with this mission, monitoring data in five key result areas:

- student development,
- human resource management,
- leadership,
- community support, and
- financial stability.

Measures include levels of student achievement, trend data, the results of benchmarking with similar educational providers in the county, state, and nation, as well as efforts to benchmark PCSD students internationally.

### Student Development

Stanford Achievement Tests in reading and mathematics are administered at the elementary and middle school levels. Results over a multi-year period indicate continued high achievement across grades 2, 4, 5, and 7 as compared with national norms. These results are confirmed by the results of New York State tests in reading, mathematics, and writing. Over the years, in reading and math, at least 97% of PCSD students have scored above the state reference point. This compares favorably with other districts within the state, and with local districts similar to PCSD. On writing assessments, students have scored above the state reference point at least 95% of the time, comparable with the results of similar districts.

In order to benchmark student achievement internationally, the International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP) in math and science has been administered to students in grades 4 and 8. On each question, the percent of correct responses for PCSD students is equivalent to or better than that of the highest scoring country on each individual question.

At the high school level, PCSD tracks both graduation and drop-out rates, maintaining a better than 98% graduation rate. At the same time, the drop out rate has consistently remained at 0.5% or below. In addition, the district encourages students to participate in the challenging course requirements and examinations of the New York State Regents Program. Typically, 76% of PCSD students receive Regents diplomas, well above the state average of 50%. The district also tracks scores on individual Regents exams. The percentage of PCSD students passing Regents exams is in the high 90s for all exams, well above the average for similar schools in the county. The participation in Advanced Placement (AP) programs and the results of AP examinations are also important indicators of a high academic excellence. Well over 200 AP exams are written each year by PCSD students, and the percentage of students who score 3 or above (the score that most colleges require in order to give credit) is above 90%.

In addition to traditional academic measures, PCSD assesses its success in developing students' physical, artistic, and musical talents by monitoring the participation in elective courses and extracurricular activities and teams, as well as awards received in these areas for levels of excellence. Both participation and achievement are consistently high in all three areas.

A final academic measure follows students' post high school plans. The number of PCSD seniors who are college bound is regularly above 90%. On both verbal and mathematics tests, PCSD students' scores on SAT college entrance tests have increased over the years and are significantly higher than both state and national results.

To track social-emotional development, PCSD records out-of-school suspension rates and the number of violent incidents on school property, both of which remain low. Students and staff are trained in conflict resolution.

**Human Resource Management**

The importance of a highly capable, well-trained staff is recognized by PCSD. A strong supervisory process has been developed along with an emphasis on individual responsibility for continuing professional development. Ninety-three percent of the PCSD staff have personal or

professional development plans; 76% of the PCSD staff take workshops and attend conferences to improve their professional skills; and 100% of the new district initiatives contain staff training programs.

**Leadership**

Leadership is reflected in the ability of PCSD to move forward on the initiatives of the CAP. Surveys of members in decision-making groups indicate that 66% believe that the CAP is being implemented properly.

**Community Support**

Community support is extremely important to the success of the school district, and a variety of measures are used to assess this area. Satisfaction surveys indicate that parents, staff, and students rate their satisfaction with the district a 7.8 out of a possible 10. Over the years, community support for the budget has remained high. An end-of-school survey administered each year shows that 98% percent of parents rate communication with the school to be adequate or exceptional, and 90% see themselves as actively involved with their children's education.

**Financial Stability**

Over the years, the district has had to respond to reductions in state aid as well as increased pressure keep tax increases to a minimum. However, there has also been an increase in community expectations for quality. One measure used to track success in managing resources is the percentage of budget available for instruction. In the case of PCSD, the percentage of the budget devoted to instruction has increased from 60% to 70% over a ten-year period. Other data show that the district has been able to continually reduce administrative costs, a reduction that is higher than that of any other district in the county.

The district also monitors growth in tax rates by looking at the true value tax rate and the relationship of its growth as compared to other county school districts. Pittsford ranks 9 out of 18 in the county for true value tax rate.

PCSD monitors its credit rating closely in order to provide the public with an overall assessment of its financial responsibility. Moody's rates PCSD's credit as AA, noting its "strong cash position, a below average debt burden, and per capita debt." PCSD is one of only two districts north of Westchester County to hold an AA rating.

**Lessons Learned**

Pittsford's experience in using the Excelsior/Baldrige model has been extremely positive. Because of the high concentration of corporations in the area that use quality management practices, PCSD has gained enormous credibility with key stakeholders in the Rochester community. When the superintendent and other district officials present a budget or address the community on quality management issues, they speak a common language that parents and business partners understand and respect.

Additionally, PCSD realized tremendous value from *The Excelsior Award* application process, because its objective, third-party assessment was credible with the Board of Education and the community. PCSD's decision to share its first Excelsior Feedback Report so widely served to make the improvement efforts a very public phenomenon. As a result, improvement plans were endorsed by the full community, all who came to understand that not winning was acceptable as long as the district learned from the experience and subsequently improved its performance.

Because of its success, PCSD could have begun the process of cascading its management approach into the local level sooner.

**Next Steps**

In the future, the district plans to do more of the same, getting better at every level. The management structure is firmly established, its practices integrated fully into PCSD's planning process. PCSD is committed to continuous improvement and there is widespread belief that the Excelsior/Baldrige model is applicable and appropriate for the school district. The model has enhanced everyone's sense of focus and enabled the community to work together as a team toward common goals.

**Alignment of Improvement Efforts**

In 1989 the district drafted a Mission Statement that clearly expressed the direction and intent of its efforts. The statement was developed by students, parents, teachers, administrators, Board of Education members, and other community representatives and embodied the long-standing mission of the district to identify the development of each child's potential as the primary goal of education. The provision of "...a safe and nurturing environment in which all students can learn..." is specified as a shared responsibility. Partnerships with the community have become essential to providing these rich opportunities for students. However, the delivery of programs and services to students must be evaluated. Do they truly meet the needs and serve the interests of students? Have they been planned and implemented through the cooperative decisions of all stakeholders? And, are the resources and environment adequate and appropriate?

To ensure credible evaluation, PCSD uses several mechanisms to provide systematic assessment of its programs and services. Under the authority of the Board of Education, a DPT identifies and prioritizes current and long-term issues and incorporates them in PCSD's CAP. The CAP reflects the Excelsior/Baldrige model and has five operational strands with complementary assessment components for each:

- student performance,
- human resource management,
- leadership,
- financial stability, and
- community support.

These five strands are interdependent and cover every operational activity of the school district.

The Instructional Leadership Council (ILC), the district-wide curriculum management system, and the Budget Review Committee (BRC) reviews and identifies strategic issues. When approved, these strategic issues are published, implemented and assessed. Each school building and operational department of the district is linked to this system through the CAP and through participation in various implementation groups. PCSD's commitment to including the entire

community in all processes, and its timely identification of and response to the needs of its students and the community, have proven effective and are key components in the alignment of the district's continuous improvement efforts.

Inherent to the operation of PCSD is the belief that all members of the school community must be involved in issues that concern them. From decision-making to grade level and department affairs, staff, community members and, where applicable, students are asked and encouraged to become involved. Indeed, this principle of participation is so much a part of PCSD's culture that it requires little effort to promote and secure community involvement. The Pittsford District Teachers' Association (PDTA), the Administrators' Association (PDAA), the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), and various other groups in the district actively embrace this spirit of cooperative effort, reflecting the many PCSD partnerships and associations with external agencies.

**Use of Benchmarking**

PCSD conducts ongoing benchmarking activities to identify best practices in a variety of ways. Superintendent O'Rourke participates in the 100 Suburban School Superintendents group, comprised of district leaders from across the country. Also, Pittsford participates in benchmarking activities with 25 outstanding school districts in New York State and the other 17 districts in Monroe County.

The district has incorporated a number of improvements as a result of this benchmarking. One of the most interesting is the institution of an assessment process to monitor the softer aspects of student achievement, such as self-esteem, social, and emotional development. Traditionally school districts have given little attention to assessing these areas, but PCSD has created measures to assess them and uses the results to augment Regents data.

**Outreach Activities**

PCSD is an active and willing role model for excellence in education in New York State. The district maintains a solid partnership with The Empire State Advantage (ESA): Excellence at

Work, the organization that administers *The Governor's Award for Excellence* and The ESA Certification Program. Currently, PCSD is working with ESA on two important initiatives to advance the understanding and use of the Baldrige model in other New York school districts:

1. Pittsford sits on the **Educational Roundtable**, which is a consortium of schools and school districts that have either won the *Excelsior/Governor's Award* or have been certified as *Empire State Silver* or *Gold* through The ESA Program. The Roundtable was convened for the first time in 1999 to provide an opportunity for the participants to benchmark, share best practices and learn from each other how they can make meaningful improvements in their management processes.
2. Pittsford is one of four districts working with ESA on the **Centers for Excellence** program in New York State, a new initiative designed to expand the use of the Baldrige model within school districts across the state. Funded by a Goals 2000 Grant administered by the Department of Education, the four role-model districts will work with ten other districts in various regions of New York to demonstrate the positive impact the Baldrige model can have on student achievement and school improvement.

# APPENDIX

## Authors

Dr. Gerald Anderson
Superintendent
Brazosport Independent School District
Administrative Offices
301 Brazoswood Dr.
Freeport, TX 77531
409/265-6181

John Barth
Senior Education Associate
National Education Goals Panel
1255 22nd St., NW
Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037
202/724-0108

Zona Sharp Burk
Executive Director
Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266
651/582-8476

Dr. Raymond P. Farley
Superintendent
Hunterdon Central Regional High School
84 Route 31
Flemington, NJ 08822
908/284-7161

Barbara Ann Harms
Director
Empire State Advantage Office
11 Computer Dr., West
Suite 212
Albany, NY 12205
518/482-1747

Tom Houlihan
President and CEO
North Carolina Partnership for Excellence
304 N. Second St.
Smithfield, NC 27577
919/989-6907
thouliha@dockpoint.net

Dr. John O'Rourke
Superintendent
Pittsford Central Schools
Administration Bldg.
42 West Jefferson Rd.
Pittsford, NY 14534-1978
716/218-1004
john_o'rourke@ccmail.monroe.edu

Dr. Ken Rigsby
Executive Director
Quality Academy
Pinellas County Schools
301 Fourth St.
Largo, FL 33770
727/588-6295
rigsbyk@pinellas.k12.fl.us

Richard Serfass
Executive Director
Quality New Jersey
20 West State St., 4th Floor
P.O. Box 827
Trenton, NJ 08525-0827
609/777-0940
rserfass@recom.com

AASA Quality Network News, Vol.10, No. 1 - January/February, 2000

***Leading the Charge***

## *AIR COVER* FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

**by Lew Rhodes**

**Concerns about education have moved to the top of public – and therefore political – agendas. Each month seems to bring a new plan from the outside to "fix" schools' insides. In contrast, a new initiative - *BiE-IN*: the *Baldrige in Education Initiative* - touches on areas at the core of this Network's interest, internally-driven *systemic* change. So QNN thought it would look more deeply at this approach and what was behind it. We were somewhat surprised by the new model of collaboration we found there.**

BiE-IN was developed and launched in mid-1999, and is managed by two national business organizations -- the *National Alliance of Business* and the *American Productivity & Quality Center*. To find out why these two organizations in particular are behind this, and why they chose this specific approach, QNN met with Roberts T. Jones, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Alliance of Business. Prior to joining NAB, he had been vice president of RJR Nabisco, Inc. and had served both Presidents Reagan and Bush as Assistant Secretary of Labor, responsible for policies addressing the significant changes in work and the workplace.

*****

**QNN: There seem to be so many national change initiatives spinning around schools today, why did your two organizations feel you had to add another one? And why one that seems to some to be recommending that schools apply a "business" approach?**

**Jones:** The best answer to both those questions may be that we're good *learners*. Each of our organizations has been involved with attempts to transform American business and industry, and we've learned a lot about what does *not* work when you try to improve an organization systemically. We can see many parallels between what industry faced in the 60's and 70's and the situations in which schools find themselves today, and we don't want schools to have to learn the same lessons.

**QNN: What conditions do you see as the same?**

**Jones:** First, one difference: children are not widgets that can be discarded if experimental programs and pilots don't work. Yet many politicians today are making the same mistakes business did in the 60's and 70's. They look for what's [or who's] wrong, and then propose episodic, reactive "fixes" that address only part of the system. These "tests", and "pilots" fragment resources and make it impossible for people in schools to sustain focus on common objectives and work towards them together.

Second is the matter of *respect* in two important dimensions -- one external, the other internal. American business didn't respect its "*market.*" There was a lot of data out there that could have kept us aware of what the world needed from us. We largely ignored it because it came from outside the systems we controlled.

Similarly, for what may be the first time, many of the pressures affecting schools, and the children in them, today are coming from outside the schools. And schools have little control over them. A look at any major newspaper or news magazine today will tell you that the demands on schools to "change" are no longer being driven by theory-based research. If you'll excuse my business terms, education's "market" is saying that the "product" schools have been structured to develop no longer can meet their "customer's" [society's] needs.

Finally, while it was bad enough that industry didn't respect, and take seriously, changes in the world that "used" our products, we also failed to respect and understand where the strength of our industries capacity to change lay. Because we had seldom found reasons to search for it, it seemed almost counter-intuitive to suggest that it was in our own workforce's creativity. We didn't respect our own people's capacities to come up with creative ways to respond to these new demands.

Even though Deming and others told us this was the source of our power to change -- and provided ways to tap into and support those inherent resources -- we found ourselves fighting a deeply-embedded culture. Still, a lot of us who accepted the principles of "quality" kept at it -- trying to do it *harder*. But it wasn't until the Baldrige concept came along that we began to see a way to do it *smarter.*

**QNN: Since the "Baldrige" approach builds from the same body of beliefs and values found in "quality" and "continual improvement" approaches, what was so different this time? Was it that it was an *award?***

**Jones:** No, not the "award" aspect. But we live in a competitive economy, and this "carrot" is sometimes needed to initially drive the hard work of re-thinking every aspect of what goes on in an organization. The real difference was that the "Baldrige" dealt with the entire organization as a *single entity*, not separately-fixable parts.

There's nothing magic in the approach. Basically, it's common sense based upon scientific methods of purposeful inquiry. All it really does is raise questions that people need to ask-- but within that larger "system" framework. And then -- here's where the "quality" processes come in -- it offers opportunities for people in the system to come up with better answers that can serve as a common knowledge base for all of them as they do their interdependent work.

So, it isn't really a "business approach." Business only developed and used it first, and now wants to share what it's learned with education.

**QNN: How has this affected the design of the BiE-In strategy?**

**Jones:** Our communities need a systemic response to a systemic problem. There are too many "programs" today coming down on top of schools. Each a separate "solution" intended to

produce overall better results. Sadly, schools could do each one of them "right" and still never fix the system needed to sustain them.

Instead, we see the Baldrige approach fitting neatly with the current "results"-driven focus of the public agenda -- in particular, standards and improving student achievement for *all* children. It is especially needed since one of the unintended consequences of the current passion for outcome standards, is that many people seem to have lost all respect for the "processes" for achieving them.

At some point we have to respect and turn the discussion over to superintendents, teachers and principals so they can reframe what they do in terms of these outcomes, and have the support to figure out how they will do it. They have to have a safe environment in which they will have the tools to futz with the processes while holding outcomes constant. And "safe" means that the working space has to be part of a larger community environment that has the same focus on outcomes, and is willing to accept new and different ways of doing business because they respect and understand how it all fits together.

**QNN: What is going to make it "safe?"**

**Jones:** BiE-IN is a *collaboration* because we know that school systems can't do this alone. And we're not the only ones who recognize this. At the recent Business-Education Summit of governors, business leaders and educators, people described this new business sector role as "providing *air cover*" for schools.

*Air cover* means that it is up to us - leaders outside of schools - to make the case with the public about why their children must leave school with new types of skills and understandings -- skills essential, not just for work, but for living in this new century. That's where schools need support for "respecting their market."

But then we also have to address the other aspect of respect -- the same counter-intuitive culture we confronted in industry which didn't respect that people within an organization - if given clear goals and continual support for coming closer to them each day -- are smart enough to do the job. We must help make the case for the continual improvement processes that empower educational leaders in districts, schools and classrooms to direct the needed changes.

We have to create new forms of partnerships that respect superintendents and principals as "CEO's," and make a place for them at the table when we discuss processes for accomplishing outcomes. When these processes are based upon sound human values and principles we know they work, regardless of setting.

So "air cover" involves business leaders saying two things to their communities. First: Here's are the global social and economic influences that are impacting American business and society as a whole. Our children's, and *our*, survival depends upon how well we respond to them. And second: We have the confidence that with appropriate help educators can figure out how to do it.

**QNN: You said at the beginning that the BiE-IN approach developed out of what you learned in business organizations, but it seems to go beyond just organizational issues.**

Yes, I think that NAB and APQC initiated BiE-IN because we've learned that this is really about culture change. And not just in schools. It's culture change in the community. It's about a community standing up and saying we're not going to go through this again. We're going to help create a school system that has the sustained capacity to build upon its own creative assets, and continually make more of a differences in the lives of our children.

---

*Lew Rhodes is the AASA Quality Network Liaison, 814 Lamberton Drive, Silver Spring MD 20902-3037, (301) 649-1296; lewrhodes@aol.com.*

*For addtional information on BiE-IN, visit www.bien.org*

## Baldrige Criteria / Total Quality Management Resources

**Organizations**

- WWW.NAB.com
  The National Alliance of Business is a national business organization focused on increasing student achievement and improving the competitiveness of the workforce.

- WWW.BIEIN.org
  Ongoing information on Baldrige in Education Initiative (BiE IN).

- WWW.ncpe-online.org
  The North Carolina Partnership for Excellence (NCPE) is a nonprofit, private-public partnership created to support existing school system partners and to create additional supportive networks involving business, higher education, school systems, and local communities. NCPE encourages partnerships with national, state, and local organizations to improve education in North Carolina

**Publications, Reports and Video**

- ***Quality in the Classroom: How Students and Teachers Co-Manage the Learning Process*** —Video and participants guide, National Alliance of Business, 1-800-787-7788; (R7049) no charge, $10 Shipping

- ***Ramping Up Reform in North Carolina*** — Report, SERVE – 1-800-352-6001; (RDRUR) $ 8.00 + Shipping

- ***Baldrige Education Criteria, 1999*** — Report, NIST – 301-975-2036; www.quality.nist.gov, no charge for one copy

- ***Using Quality to Achieve Standards: How Educators and Business Can Take Action Together*** —Publication, National Alliance of Business

- ***Using Quality to Redesign School Systems: The Cutting Edge of Common Sense***—Publication, National Alliance of Business

- ***An Introduction to Total Quality for Schools: A Collection of Articles on the Concepts of Total Quality Management and W. Edwards Deming*** —Publication, American Association of School Administrators, 1991

- ***Insights to Excellence: Understanding Sterling 1997*** —Publication, Blazey, Mark L. Quantum Performance Group, Inc., 1996

- ***Schools of Quality: An Introduction to Total Quality Management in Education*** —Publication, Bonsting, John Jay, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1992

- ***The Memory Jogger Plus+*** —Publication, Brassard, Michael, Methuen, GOAL/QPC, 1989

- ***Baldrige Award Winning Quality: How to Interpret the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence*** —Publication, Brown, Mark Graham Quality Resources, 1997

- ***Why TQM Fails and What to Do About It*** —Publication, Brown, Mark Graham, Hitchcock, Carcy E. and Willard, Marsha L. 1994.

- ***The Work Redesign Team Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Self-Directed Teams*** —Publication, Hitchcock, Carcy, Quality Resources, 1994

- ***CommonSense.com – Real answers for real educators from an unlikely source*** —Publication, Houlihan, Thomas and Phillips Judy S., 2000

- ***Juran's Quality Control Handbook*** —Publication, Juran, J.M. and Gryna, Frank M. 1988

- ***The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*** — Publication, Kuzes, James M. and Posner, Barry Z., 1995

- ***Quality Goes to School: Reading on Quality Management*** — Publication, 1994

- ***Driving Fear Out of the Workplace: How to Overcome the Invisible Barriers to Quality, Productivity, and Innovation*** — Publication, Ryan, K. and Oestreich, D.K.

- ***The Deming Route to Quality and Productivity, Road Maps, and Roadblocks*** — Publication, Scherkenback, William W., 1987

- ***Total Quality Education: Profiles of Schools that Demonstrate the Power of Deming's Management Principles*** — Publication, Schmoker, Michael J. and Wilson, Richard B. 1993

- ***The Team Handbook: How to Use Teams to Improve Quality*** — Publication, Scholtes, Peter R., 1988

- ***Going to Scale with TQM: The Pinellas County Schools' Journey Toward Quality*** — Publication, Shipley, Jim and Chris Collins, SERVE, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1997

- ***Ramping Up Reform*** — Publication, Siegel, Peggy, SERVE, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1999

- ***The Quality Toolbox*** — Publication, Tague, Nancy R. 1995



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 2000-520-054/94775

# NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL STAFF

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Ken Nelson**

## PROGRAM STAFF

| | |
|---|---|
| John Barth | Senior Education Associate |
| Burt Glassman | Education Associate |
| Chris Harrington | Education Associate |
| Cynthia D. Prince | Associate Director for Analysis and Reporting |
| Emily O. Wurtz | Senior Education Associate |

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

| | |
|---|---|
| Cynthia M. Dixon | Program Assistant |
| Erika Kirby | Secretary |
| John J. Masaitis | Executive Officer |

**National Education Goals Panel**
**1255 22nd Street, NW, Suite 502**
**Washington, DC 20037**
**202-724-0015**
**Fax: 202-632-0957**
**www.negp.gov**
**negp@ed.gov**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE